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ABSTRACT

This report provides, in textual and tabular forms, information on the role of ethnicity in special education identification and placement in Illinois. Comparison of the ethnic composition of the total public elementary and secondary education population and of students receiving special education services indicated some disproportions. White students were more likely to be identified for special education services than were Blacks, Hispanics, American Indian/Alaskan natives, or Asians. The percentages of students of different ethnic origins identified for special education services varied substantially across school districts (e.g., 0-53.7 percent for Blacks and 0-43.8 percent for Hispanics). Most Hispanic, White, Black, and American Indian/Alaskan native students in special education were identified as having a learning disability, whereas the primary disability of most Asian students in special education was a speech and/or language impairment. School district size was found to influence the role of ethnicity in special education identification and placement in that White students were less likely to be placed in special education in smaller districts, Black and Hispanic students were more likely to be so placed in smaller and intermediate sized districts, and Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students were less likely to be placed in special education than other groups. An appendix details findings. (DB)

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Executive Abstract

The Role of Ethnicity in Special Education Identification and Educational Setting Placement in Illinois

Illinois' public school population of children and youth aged 3-21 is comprised of five basic ethnic groups, which include Asians, a combined category for American Indians and Alaskan natives, Blacks, Hispanics and Whites. For the decade of 1979-80 through 1988-89, Whites, Blacks and Hispanics comprised 97.9% of Illinois' 1,877.646 (average) public elementary and secondary students aged 3 to 21 (68.8%, 21.7% and 7.4% respectively) and 98.8% of the 239,978 (average) students served in special education programs (71.2%, 22.5% and 5.1% respectively). Asians and American Indians/Alaskan natives composed 2.1% of school enrollments and only 1.2% of the special education population.

Compared to the ethnic compositions of total public elementary and secondary education enrollments for the decade, disproportionality existed in the percentages of students of different ethnic origins who received special education and related services and the percentages of th/e ethnic groups identified as having a specific disability. By the end of the decade, White students (14%) were more likely to be identified for special education services than were Blacks (13.0%), Hispanics (8.8%), American Indian/Alaskan natives (7.6%) or Asians (5.9%). The percentages of students in different ethnic origins who were identified for special education services across school districts varied substantially; e.g., 0-53.7% for Blacks and 0-43.8% for Hispanics.

From 1986-87 through 1988-89, most Hispanic (47.5%), White (45.0%), Black (38.5%) and American Indian/Alaskan native (34.5%) students aged 3-21 who were served in special education were identified as having a learning disability as their primary disability. For the same period, the primary disability of 54.8% of Asian students served in special education was a speech and/or language impairment.

The number of students enrolled in a school district may have an effect on the ethnic mix of the special education population served. By comparing the ethnic composition of students enrolled to the ethnicity of the special education populations in three groupings of special education service units for the period 1986-87 through 1988-89 (excluding Chicago District #299 and the Department of Corrections, 88 of the state's districts and joint agreements were divided by enrollment size into three groups), it does appear that:

- White students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in smaller sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with greater enrollments.
- Black students are more likely to be placed in special education programs in smaller and intermediate sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with the largest enrollments.

- Hispanic students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in the largest sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with intermediate or smaller enrollments.

- Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students are less likely than other ethnic groups to be placed in special education programs in service units of any enrollment size.

Although this analysis does indicate that the size of a school districts' student population may influence ethnic placements in special education, caution should be exercised in interpreting these findings since population size **may be** a proxy for other variables such as wealth, education level of the adult population and others.

Based on statewide data for the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, the percentages of placements of students of different ethnic origins who have disabilities in alternative educational settings to receive special educational instruction and related services are not equal or nearly equal. During this period, a much greater percentage of White students with disabilities received special education services in full-time regular education classrooms (32.1%) than did Black (18.7%) or Hispanic students (20.8%). Most Asian students (52.7%) who received special education services were placed in full-time regular education classes. Much greater percentages of Black (34.3%) and Hispanic (28.4%) students were placed in full-time special education classes or separate schools than White (21.3%) or Asian (19.7%) students. American Indian/Alaskan native students were more evenly distributed across the alternative educational settings than other ethnicities.

While the disproportionate representations of ethnic groups in special education and across educational settings are likely the results of culturally biased methods of measuring need for special education services, non-uniform applications of ethnically neutral and subject-relevant program entrance criteria, nondistinct eligibility criteria for special education services of two or more categories of disabilities, extended effects of poverty or some combination of these processes, the data collected for these analyses were only relevant to determination of proportional relationships of ethnic groups in educational settings and in special education programs compared to enrollments in the public education system and therefore did not yield any clues regarding specific causes of the ethnic disproportionalities that were identified.

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THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION IDENTIFICATION AND EDUCATIONAL SETTING PLACEMENT IN ILLINOIS

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY

There will likely be very little, if any, informed debate regarding the concept that, with perhaps one exception, ethnic origin **should not** be used as a criterion for determining any student's need for special education and related services. This same logic holds that ethnic groups' representations in special education programs and educational settings should be about the same as the ethnic distribution found in the total elementary and secondary educational system enrollments.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, the term ethnic is defined as, "of or pertaining to a social group within a culture and social system that claims or is accorded special status on the basis of complex often variable traits including religious, linguistic, ancestral or physical characteristics." With the possible exception of the linguistic component, nothing in this definition supports the concept that ethnicity should be used as a basis for eligibility for special educational services.

In Illinois, children and youth who are determined to have speech and language impairments which qualify them for special education and related services exhibit "...deviations of speech and/or language processes which are outside the range of acceptable variations within a given environment and which prevent full social or educational development." Data displayed in Table 7 (Appendix) and Figure 4 (text) support the contention that ethnicity may play a significant role in predicting a student's eligibility for specially designed instruction and related services for speech and language impairments. For example, during the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the primary disability of 54.8% of all students served in special education of Asian descent was speech and language disabled, a rate that was almost three times higher than that of Black students and 67.1% greater than the percentage of White students with this disability. However, other data, including those provided in Table 3 and Figure 2 which shows that Asians are placed in special education at much lower rates than other ethnic groups (e.g. in 1988-89, only 5.9% of Asian students aged 3-21 who were enrolled in public elementary and secondary education were served in special education compared to 14.0%, 13.0%, 9.0% and 7.6% of White, Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaskan native students respectively), suggest that the disproportionately high percentage of this ethnic group served in speech and language impairment (S/LI) programs may be more the result of underrepresentation in other special education programs than the ethnicity serving as a predictor of the need for S/LI program services.

Other traits unique to an ethnic group, including religious, ancestral or physical characteristics, are unlikely predictors of the need for special education. Disproportionate representation of ethnic groups in special education programs can more readily be traced to culturally biased methods of measuring need for special education services, non-uniform applications of ethnically neutral and subject-relevant program entrance criteria, nondistinct eligibility criteria for special education services of two or more categories of disabilities and, unfortunately, the grim ancillary effects of poverty. Potentially culturally biased measurements of disabilities requiring specialized instruction have been the focus of public attention and have received rigorous scrutiny over the past several decades by the educational community, the legal system and numerous special interest groups when it has been determined by some measure or measures that an ethnic group's

representation in a special education program was disproportionately higher than their representation in total elementary and secondary education enrollments and/or in the special education population.

Certainly, culturally biased tests and other criteria to determine eligibility for special education and related services have been primary causes of disproportionately high placements of some ethnic groups in certain special education programs; however, this same result can be produced by applying nonbiased identification procedures for special education eligibility to only selected ethnic groups. The product of this approach would be the **appearance** of ethnic overrepresentation in a program, while, in fact, the disproportionality was created by underrepresentations of other ethnic groups in the disability category.

Another potential cause of ethnic disproportionality in special education programs is the existence of two or more special education programs with similar entrance criteria. In such cases, each of the categories of disabilities with similar program entrance criteria, such as some programs for educable mentally impaired and learning disabled children and youth, is likely to have disproportional ethnic representations due to administrative preference in placements of students of different ethnic origins for special education services.

It is important to note that each of the three methods of artificially producing ethnic disproportionality in special education programs has a potentiality different effect. Culturally biased entrance criteria and measurement procedures generally inappropriately place students with certain ethnic origins in special education programs they do not need; whereas the second method, non-uniform application of valid entrance criteria, would restrict access to needed services due to ethnicity. And, although special education programs with similar entrance criteria may serve a disproportionate ethnic mix of students in each program, in this situation, all students who need special education for their disabilities may be receiving appropriate services. Poverty is yet another potential cause of ethnic disproportionality in special education programs. Unlike the other three methods, poverty produces a very real need for special education that is ethnically disproportionate. Various studies conducted over the past decade for the National Institute of Education, National Center for Children in Poverty, National Center for Health Statistics, Children's Defense Fund and other organizations have clearly determined that children born to mothers who live on incomes that are at or below poverty levels are much more likely to require special education than children of mothers who have greater financial resources. Numerous studies over this period also have shown that a much higher percentage of Black and Hispanic children are living in poverty than White, Asian, or American Indian/Alaskan native children.

The linkage between poverty and the need for special education services can be initially traced directly to poor prenatal care. Without care in the first three months a mother is three to six times more likely to produce a premature and/or low birth weight baby. According to a National Institute of Education study, two-thirds of infants born under five pounds and five ounces sustain mental or emotional disabilities in infancy or childhood and three fourths of those who weigh less than three pounds and three ounces develop physical and mental disabilities. Without sufficient resources to purchase health insurance (or to be eligible for a funded government program which provides such benefits), poor mothers-to-be do not receive critical prenatal care.

A second important link between poverty and the need for special education services is inadequate health care for poor children. According to the National Center on Health Statistics, poor children under the age of six make significantly fewer physician visits annually than those children who are not poor. About 15% of poor children under 17 years old do not have a regular source of medical care, a rate that is twice that of "nonpoor" children. Untreated medical conditions, the lack of immunizations, and other types of inadequate medical care can/do lead to the permanent disabilities.

Deficient diets of children from poverty households form another link between poverty and special education. Particularly in the first few years of life, poor nutrition can negatively impact a child's physical growth and brain development. Finally, the environment in which a poor child must live often places him or her at a greater risk than financially secure children of physical injury that could cause disabilities and emotional turmoil that could arrest needed psychological and social development.

The relationship between ethnic disproportionality in poverty and special education programs is, unfortunately all too clearly established. According to various U.S. Census Bureau reports, between 43% and 47% of Black children and 39% and 41% of Hispanic children live in poverty households, compared to 18% or fewer White children.

Thus, since a higher percentage of poor children require special education than those from higher income households and much higher percentages of Black and Hispanic children are poor compared to White children, **it is clear that the interrelationship of ethnicity and poverty produce a genuine need for disproportionately greater placements in special education programs.** Available research also suggests that children born to mothers subsiding on poverty incomes are likely to develop proportionally more severe levels of disabilities than children not affected by poverty. To the extent that the severity of a disability may affect decisions regarding appropriate placement across alternative educational settings, this factor (poverty) may influence ethnic disproportionality in educational settings. However, available data do not permit determination of the degrees to which the impacts of poverty affect ethnic disproportionality in special education programs or placements into alternative educational settings.

Therefore, before implementing procedures to eliminate ethnic disproportionality in a special education program, educational administrators will need to first clearly identify the cause(s) of the statistical variances in ethnic representations to ensure that their corrective actions do not deny students access to needed programs and services.

ETHNICITY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: THE IDEAL DISTRIBUTION

In a utopian society, each ethnic group's proportion of the special education population would be equal to their percentage of total elementary and secondary enrollments. Stated differently, the rates of placements of all ethnic groups into all special education programs should be the same. In this perfect society, the size of the district or joint agreement would not affect program eligibility determinations or placement rates into educational settings. In this society, entrance and exit criteria for special education programs would be ethnically blind, recognizing only each student's needs for special education and related services as a result of one or

more disabilities that adversely affect educational performance. And, of course, in this ultimate society, poverty would not exist and its unwanted side-effects therefore would not be measured in terms of children and youth who disproportionately need special education services.

HOW ILLINOIS COMPARES

Illinois' public school population of children and youth aged 3-21 is composed of five basic ethnic groups, which include Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Asians and a combined category for American Indians and Alaskan natives. According to the Illinois State Board of Education's Fall Housing Report, for the decade of 1979-80 through 1988-89, Whites, Blacks and Hispanics comprised 97.9% of Illinois' elementary and secondary school-aged population, representing 68.8%, 21.7% and 7.4% respectively of total public school enrollments (Table 1 Appendix).

During the past decade, public school enrollments declined by 12.2%, from 2,043,239 in 1979-80 to 1,794,916 in 1988-89. According to the Illinois State Board of Education's Special Education Funding and Child Tracking System (FACTS), during the same period, the number of children and youth served in special education programs declined by only 9.5%. FACTS and Fall Housing Report data are reported annually to the Illinois State Board of Education by school districts and joint agreements and are audited periodically by State Board staff.

Data displayed in Tables 1 and 2 show that there were substantial changes in ethnic composition of school enrollments of students aged 3-21 over the decade, but commensurate percentage changes in ethnic composition of the special education population did not occur. Table 3 data, which displays the percentages of each ethnic group's school enrollments who were served in special education for the 1979-80 through 1988-89 decade, reveals that the changes in the ethnic mix of the special education population did not improve proportional ethnic distribution across special education programs compared to total enrollments.

However, there were improvements in the proportional ethnic distribution in some special education programs. Tables 1, 4, 5 and 6 display the changes by number and percentages during the decade of ethnic distribution in programs for students aged 3-21 whose primary disabilities were learning disabled (LD), educable mentally impaired (EMI) or seriously emotionally disturbed (SED). The percentage changes of the ethnic groups' representations in these selected programs were quite large, ranging from a 55.2% reduction to a 180.7% increase. As a result of these changes, ethnic proportionality did improve in two of the three programs that were analyzed.

Enrollments and Special Education Ethnicity Changes

The 1979-80 through 1988-89 decade witnessed a steady decline of White students enrolled in public elementary and secondary educational programs, from a high of 1,471,227 in 1979-80 to 1,189,267 in 1988-89, a 19.2% reduction. The percentage of the special education population who were White held almost constant during the period, declining by only 1.0% (Table 2).

Black students also experienced a reduction in total enrollments, declining by 5.7% over the decade from 423,095 in 1979-80 to 398,855 in 1988-89. During the same period, the percentage of the special education population who were Black declined by 7.9%.

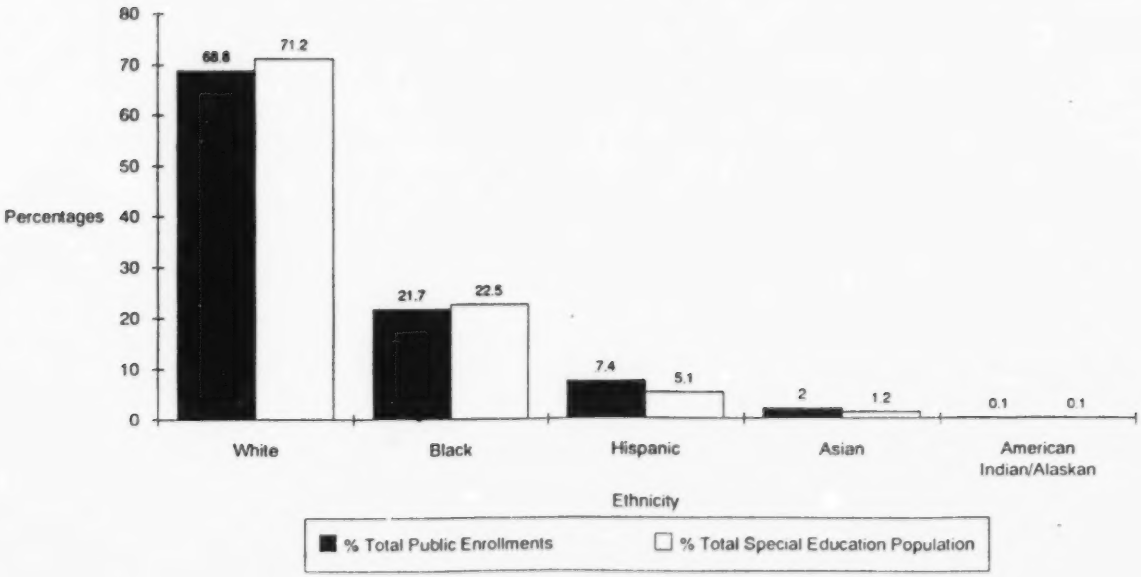
The American Indian/Alaskan native combined ethnic group, which comprised only .1% of both total enrollments and the special education population, experienced a 12.3% reduction in public school enrollments over the period, declining from 2484 in 1979-80 to 2178 in 1988-89. Over the decade, the group's percentage of the special education population remained constant at .1%, but the number of students of these ethnic origins who were served in special education declined by 18.7%.

Unlike the other three ethnic groups, Hispanic and Asian student elementary and secondary school enrollments sharply increased over the decade. Hispanic student enrollments increased by 32.0%, increasing from 120,383 in 1979-80 to 158,874 in 1988-89, and recorded the strongest percentage increase (66.5%) in the special education population of any ethnicity.

Asian enrollments recorded the strongest gains during the period, increasing by over 75.0%. However, the number of Asian students in special education increased by only 16.1% over the decade, a pattern which greatly widened the already significant difference between this ethnic group's proportion of total enrollments and its representation in the special education population. As shown in Table 2, 1.0% of the special education population and 1.3% of total public school enrollments of students aged 3-21 in 1979-80 were Asians, but these proportions increased to 1.1% and 2.5% respectively by 1988-89. Thus, over the decade, the proportion of Asians in public school enrollments increased by 92.3%, while their proportion of the special education population increased by only 10%.

Figure 1 profiles the comparative average proportions of students aged 3-21 in public school enrollments and special education programs for each ethnicity for the period 1979-80 through 1988-89.

Figure 1
Ethnic Composition of Special Education Population Compared to Total Public School Enrollments for Students Aged 3-21 from 1979-80 - 1988-89



As shown in Figure 1, White students composed 68.8% of total enrollments and 71.2% of the special education population during the decade, a 3.5% greater proportion of students served in special education programs than the ethnic groups representation in total enrollments. During this same period, the percentage of Black students served in special education also exceeded their proportion of total enrollments.

Both the Hispanic and Asian proportions of the special education populations were smaller than their proportions of total enrollments over the decade. The proportion of Hispanics of total enrollments was 45.1% greater than their percentage of the special education population. Similarly, the proportion of Asians of total enrollments over the decade was 66.7% greater than their percentage of the special education population.

The American Indian/Alaskan native ethnic category began and ended the decade with .1% of both total enrollments and the special population. As previously noted, there were declines in the numbers of students with this ethnicity in total enrollments and special education programs.

It is interesting to note that by the end of the decade, definite ethnic placement trends had evolved. At the close of 1988-89, White students were the only ethnicity to have greater representation in the special education population than in total enrollments (Table 2). The difference between the White students' proportions of the two populations (enrollments and special education) widened in each of the last four years beginning in 1985-86.

By 1988-89, Black students aged 3-21 composed 22.2% of total elementary and secondary school enrollments and accounted for 22.0% of the special education population. Thus, on a statewide basis, Black students shared with American Indians and Alaskan natives the distinction of having similar proportional representation in special education programs compared to total enrollments in the public elementary and secondary education system.

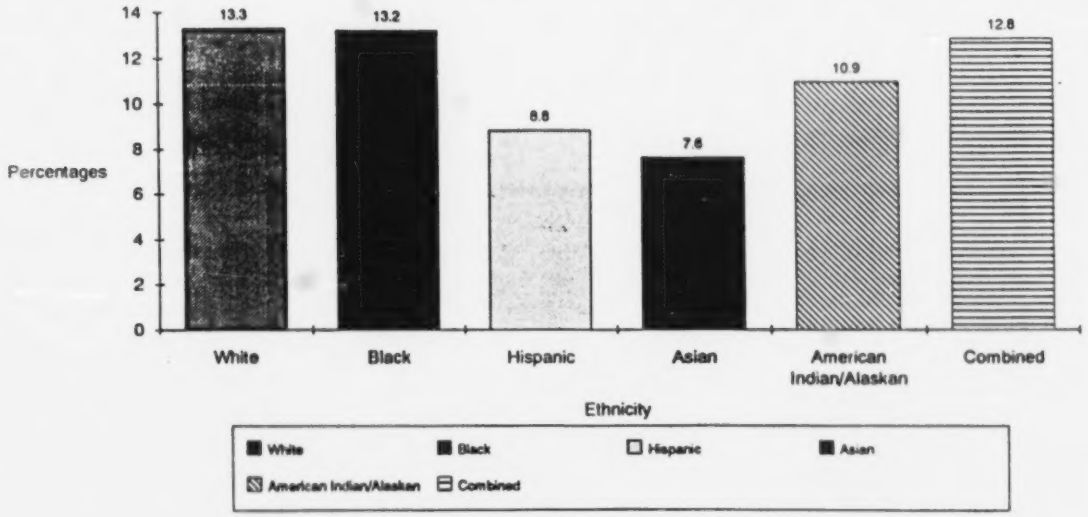
During the decade, the Hispanic populations increased in number and percentages of both total enrollments and the special education population. These increases in population size and percentages of enrollments and the special education population did not have an effect on the disproportionately low representation of this ethnic group in special education programs compared to their proportion of total enrollment. Over the decade, on a statewide basis, the percentages of Hispanic students in special education programs were consistently between 40% to 60% lower than their proportion of total enrollments, which appears to be in part, the result of disproportionately small representations in programs for students with SED (Table 4).

The number of Asian students aged 3-21 increased annually as did their proportion of total enrollments. However, because the percentage of Asians served in special education remained almost constant during the period, the disproportionately low representation of this ethnic group in special education continued to decline.

Percentage of Ethnicity in Special Education

Another, perhaps simpler, method of measuring ethnic proportionality in special education is to compare the percentages of each ethnic group's elementary and secondary education enrollment that are served in special education. Figure 2 shows the percentages of total enrollments by ethnicity of students aged 3-21 in special education for the 1979-80 through 1988-89 decade.

Figure 2
Percentages by Ethnicity of Students Aged 3-21
in Special Education of Total Enrollments for
Decade 1979-80 - 1988-89



For the decade, it is clear that ethnic representation in special education was not proportional statewide. The percentages of Whites and Blacks served in special education were more than 73.0% greater than the percentage of Asians and 50.0% greater than the percentage of Hispanics.

By the end of the decade, the rate of placements of White students (14.0%) in special education exceeded the rate of placements of Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and American Indians/Alaskan natives by 7.7%, 55.6%, 137.3% and 84.2% respectively (Table 3). Over the decade, the percentage of all students enrolled in public education who were served in special education increased from 11.4% to 13.1%. The percentage of White students placed in special education increased during the period from 11.3% in 1979-80 to 14.0% in 1988-89, a 23.9% increase. Although the percentage of Hispanic students placed in special education also increased over the decade (26.8%), the rate of placement declined in both 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Each of the remaining three ethnic groups recorded reductions in the percentages of their enrollments that were served in special education programs. The largest decrease in ethnic placement rates over the decade was recorded by Asians (32.2%), followed by relatively small reductions in the percentages of American Indians/Alaskan natives and Blacks who were placed in special education.

Significant trends in the rates at which ethnic groups were placed in special education that were apparent by the end of the decade included

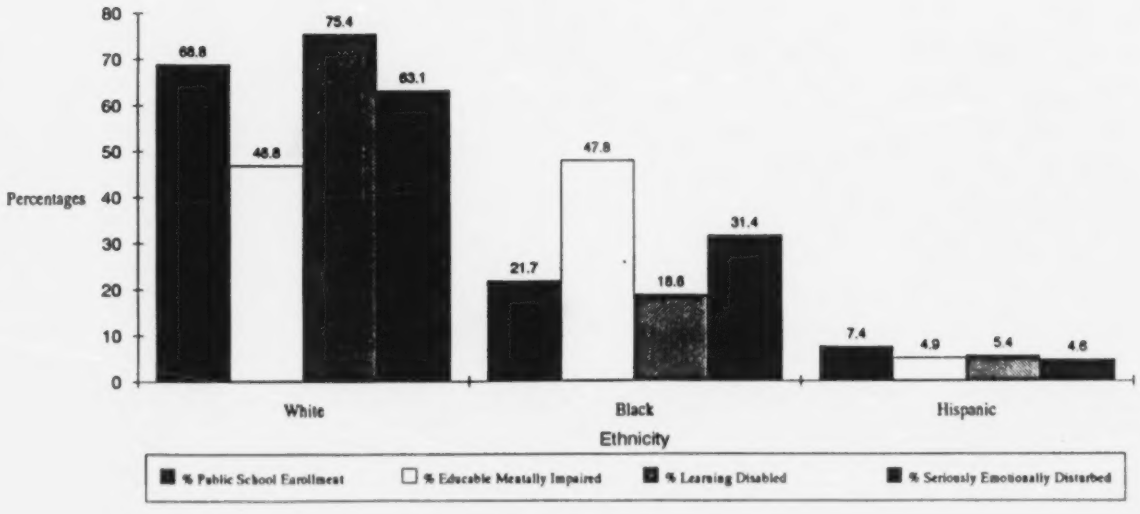
1. progressively higher percentages of White students placed in special education for each year from 1985-86 through 1988-89, and

2. progressively lower special education placement rates for each of the other ethnic groups, led by five consecutive years of reductions in the percentages of Asian students placed in special education.

Ethnic Proportionality Among Special Education Programs

While it has been demonstrated that ethnic disproportionality existed in placing students in special education over the past decade, were students placed among special education programs in proportion to the ethnic composition of the public school enrollment? Special education programs for students aged 3-21 whose primary disabilities were learning disabled, educable mentally impaired, or seriously emotionally disturbed during the 1979-80 through 1988-89 period were examined to determine the answer to this question. As the data in Figure 3 clearly demonstrate, student placements were not made among special education programs in proportion to the ethnic composition of the public school enrollments for the decade that was examined.

Figure 3
White, Black and Hispanic Composition of Public School Enrollment and Programs for Children and Youth Aged 3-21 with EMI, LD, SED Primary Disabilities for the Period 1979-80 - 1988-89



If placements in these programs had been proportional to the ethnic composition of the public school enrollment, then 68.8% of the students in each of the disability categories would have been Whites, 21.7% would have been Blacks, and 7.4% would have been Hispanics. However, Whites composed only 46.8% of the students in the educable mentally impaired category, while Black students composed a robust 47.8% of this same disability category, a 120.3% greater percentage than the ethnic group's proportion of public school enrollments. Hispanic students were more evenly distributed among the three disability programs than were Whites and Blacks. Only White, Black, and Hispanic ethnic groups were included in this phase of the analyses because the three groups composed more than 99% of the populations served in the three disability programs.

Data in Tables 1, 4, 5, 6 indicate that, at least in some special education programs, the degree of ethnic disproportionality lessened over the decade. The net effect of a 55% decrease in the number of Blacks served in EMI programs and smaller percentage decreases in the numbers of Whites and Hispanics served in these programs over the decade was to improve ethnic proportionality as measured by reducing the differences between each ethnic group's proportions of the public school enrollment and students with EMI as their primary disability.

Likewise, a 180.7% increase in the number of Hispanic students aged 3-21 with LD paired with a strong 47.1% increase in the number of Black students and a much smaller 24.1% increase of White students produced a more ethnically proportional population with this primary disability by 1988-89 compared to 1979-80 (Table 4). Over the same period, White and Black students whose primary disability was seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) moved closer to proportionality as measured by comparison of the ethnic composition of the public school enrollment to the percentages by ethnicity of students with this disability. However, although growing rapidly as a proportion of the students with this disability during the decade (4% in 1979-80 to 5.6% in 1988-89), as a result of a stronger relative growth in the percentage of Hispanic students of total enrollments, the decade concluded with a widening gap in the disproportionately low percentage of Hispanic students whose primary disability was SED.

Note: The 1980-81 data in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 vary significantly in most categories from both 1979-80 and 1981-82 data. Analysis of the 1980-81 data indicates that wide reporting variations by Chicago District #299 created distortions in the statewide ethnic proportions of students served among special education programs.

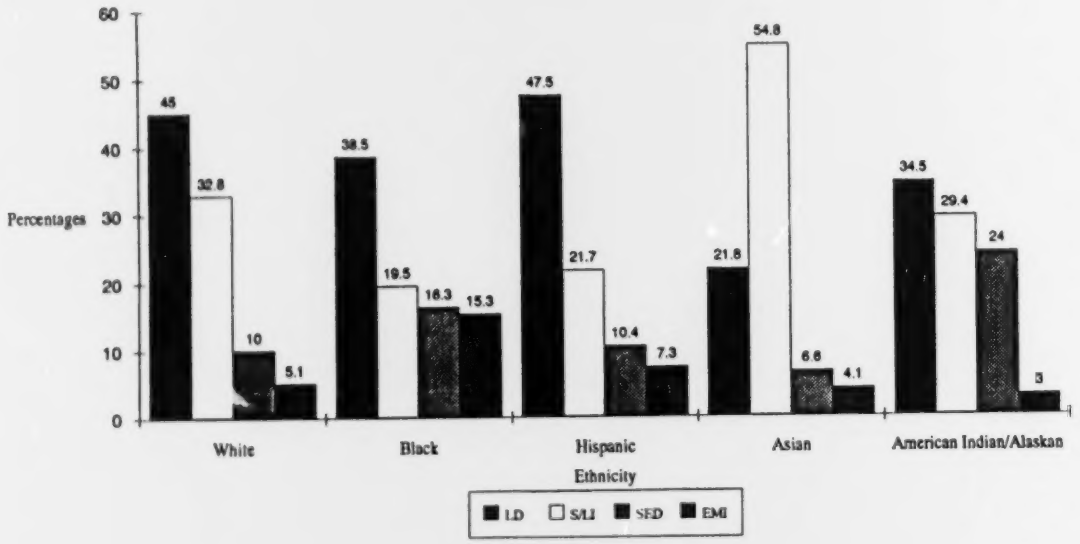
Wide variations in reporting the ethnic composition of students in special education programs by Chicago District #299 from 1979-80 through 1981-82 included a 40.0% increase in the number of White students with EMI as their primary disability in 1980-81 over the prior year, followed by a 35.8% reduction in 1981-82. In addition, the number of Black trainable mentally impaired students decreased from 2,160 in 1979-80 to 485 in 1980-81 (a 77.5% reduction), but increased to 1,954 in 1981-82 (a 302.9% increase). Similar variations in the district's reports of ethnic composition of other categories of disabilities were comparable to those reported for the EMI and TMI (trainable mentally impaired) categories. However, although 1980-81 data varied significantly in many categories from 1979-80 and 1981-82 data, the data variations had little or no impact on the analysis of decade ethnic proportionality patterns provided herein.

Primary Disability by Ethnicity

As previously noted, unless some of the ancillary effects of poverty are being experienced and/or some form of bias in placement procedures or eligibility criteria is operative, ethnic groups should be equally represented in each of the special education programs based on their percentages of the special education population. Data in Figure 4 and Table 7 show that, according to this measure of ethnic proportionality, special education programs for students aged 3-21 in 1986-87 through 1988-89 were unequally represented by ethnic groups. The period 1986-87 through 1988-89 was selected for analysis since this period was the most recent for which data were available and three years was deemed adequate to identify possible variations in the data over time.

The LD, S/LI, SED and EMI categories of disabilities were selected for analysis because almost 92% of all students served in special education during this period had one of the four disabilities as their primary disability. From 1986-87 through 1988-89, LD was the primary disability of 43.4% of all students served in special education, while the primary disability of 29.4% was S/LI, 11.4% was SED and 7.5% was EMI.

Figure 4
Primary Disability by Ethnicity for Students Aged 3-21
1986-87 - 1988-89



As shown in Figure 4, LD was the primary disability of most Hispanics, Whites, Blacks and American Indians/Alaskan natives, with 47.5%, 45.0%, 38.5% and 34.5% respectively of their total special education populations in this disability program over the period 1986-87 through 1988-89. The proportion of the Hispanic

population in this special education program was 37.7% greater than the proportion of the American Indian/Alaskan native population. However, even more significant is the fact that speech and language impairment (S/LI) was the primary disability of 54.8% of all Asians in special education programs over the three year period.

Also as shown in Figure 4, for all ethnic groups, three-fourths of the students in special education who were aged 3-21 during the 1986-87 through 1988-89 period were identified as having LD, S/LI or SED as their primary disability. The proportions of each ethnic group's total special education population that were identified as having these primary disabilities varied considerably. For example, the primary disability of 24.0% of American Indians/Alaskan natives was SED, while respectively only 6.6% and 10.0% of the Asian and White students in special education had this primary disability. Excluding Asians, a higher percentage of White students had S/LI as their primary disability than any other ethnic group. In this disability category, the proportion of Whites exceeded the proportion of Blacks by 68.2%.

It is interesting to note that during this three-year period, the percentage of Black students in special education whose primary disability was EMI (15.3%) was three times greater than the proportion of White students (5.1%) and more than double the percentage of Hispanic students (7.3%) with this primary disability.

Data in Table 7, which ranks the primary disabilities of each ethnicity by their order of incidence, indicate that discernable changes in the primary disabilities of the ethnic groups were occurring from 1986-87 through 1988-89 that had the effect of redistributing the students among special education programs but not substantially improving ethnic proportionality in the programs. For example, there was a higher percentage of each ethnic group's special education population that was identified as having LD as their primary disability in 1988-89 than in 1986-87. Increases over the period of each ethnics group's percentage with this disability ranged from .5% (Asians) to 4.5% (American Indians/Alaskan natives), but, by the end of 1988-89, the percentage of Hispanic students who had LD as their primary disability remained at more than double the percentage of Asians with this primary disability.

Similarly, over this same period, there was a lower percentage of students in each ethnic group with S/LI as their primary disability. Decreases in the percentage of each ethnic population ranged from .7% (Whites) to 3.6% (Hispanics), but the proportions of Asian students who had S/LI as their primary disability remained at almost triple the percentage of Black students with this primary disability.

Also of note is the fact that by 1988-89, EMI programs served the fourth highest percentage of students of all ethnicities in special education. Continued increases in the percentages of Asians and American Indians/Alaskan natives coupled with further reductions of the proportion of Black students with this primary disability (a 13.4% decline from 1986-87 to 1988-89) would be important factors in moving this disability category towards proportional ethnic representation.

ENROLLMENT SIZE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION ETHNIC COMPOSITION

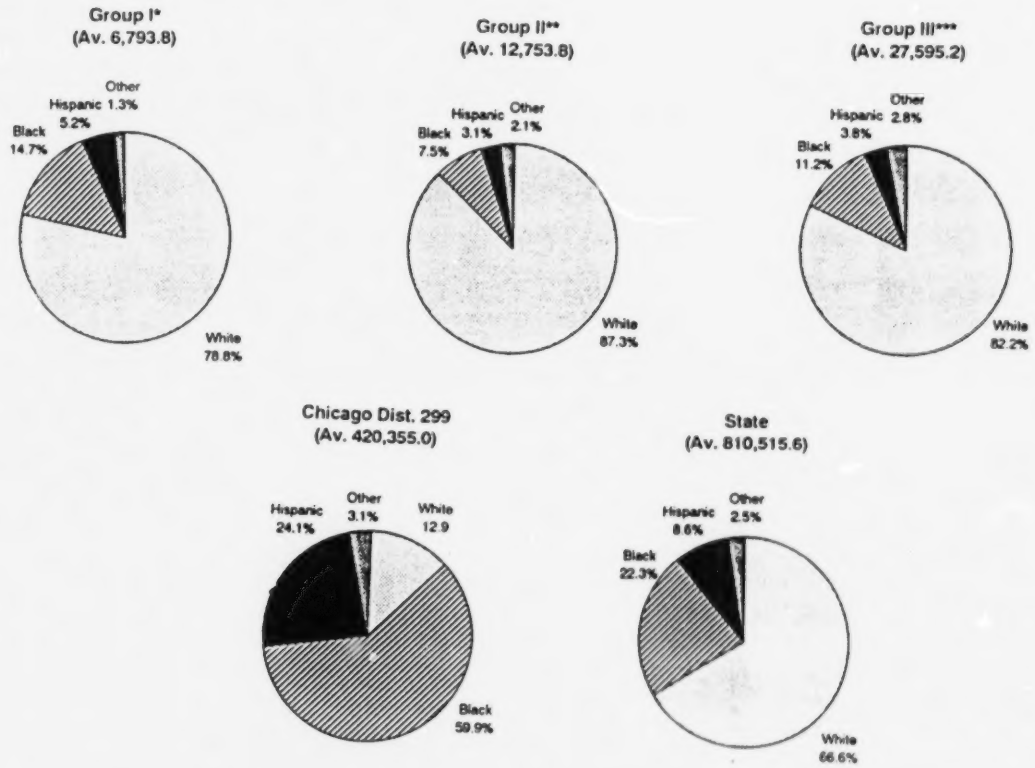
Does the number of students enrolled in a school district have an effect on the ethnic mix of special education students? In order to provide creditable responses to this question, 88 of the state's special education service units (districts and joint agreements) were divided by enrollment size for the years 1986-87 through 1988-89

into three groups, and Chicago District #299 was analyzed separately due to the unique size of its enrollments. Groups I and III contained 29 services units, while Group II was composed of 30 service units.

Public School Enrollments Ethnicity

Illustrated in Figure 5 are the differences in the ethnic composition of the public school enrollments of students aged 3-21 in the three groupings of special education service units, Chicago District #299, and the state totals for the period 1986-87 through 1988-89.

Figure 5
Ethnic Composition of Public School Enrollments of Students Aged 3-21 by District/Joint Agreement Groupings for 1986-87 - 1988-89



* Group I: 29 Smallest Districts' Enrollments
** Group II: 30 Middle-Sized Districts' Enrollments
*** Group III: 29 Largest Districts' Enrollments

It is interesting to note that of the three groupings of service units by size of enrollments, the service units that served the smallest populations (Group I - averaged 6,793.8 students and enrollments ranged from 3,021 to 8,040) had the highest percentages of Black and Hispanic students and the lowest percentage of

White students enrolled. Group II, which averaged 12,753.8 students over the three-year period (enrollments ranged from 9,055 to 16,596), had the highest percentage of White students and lowest percentages of Black and Hispanic students enrolled of the three groupings of service units. The percentage of White students in Group II (87.3%) was 10.6% greater than the proportion of this ethnic group in Group I (78.9%). More dramatic, however, were the 96.0% and 40.4% differences in the percentages of Blacks and Hispanics respectively in Group I compared to Group II.

The ethnic composition of Group III service units, which averaged 27,595.2 students over the period 1986-87 through 1988-89 (enrollments ranged from 16,397 to 69,471), was at levels that generally were between those established by groups I and II. Only the "other" category of ethnicity (Asians and American Indians/Alaskan natives) in Group III was greater than its smaller counterparts.

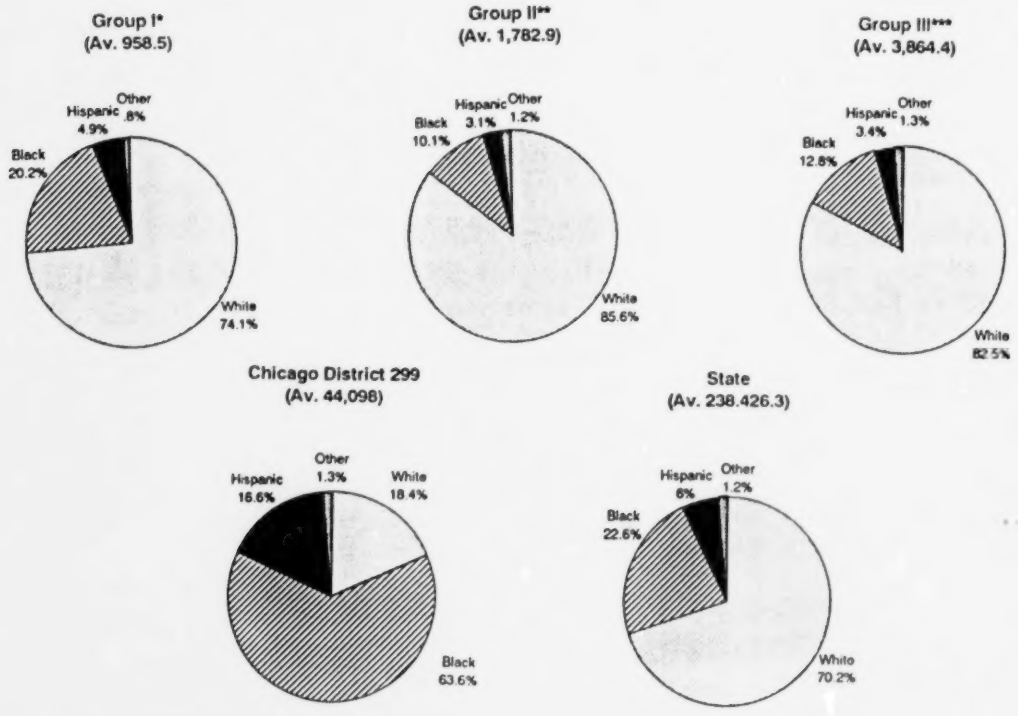
The ethnic composition of student enrollments in Chicago District #299, which averaged 420,355.0 students over the three years that were examined, was markedly different from those in Groups I, II and III. The district's enrollments were dominated by Black students who composed 60.0% of all children and youth that were served. Hispanic students composed 24.1% of the district's enrollments, while White students composed only 12.9% of those enrolled.

State total public school enrollments averaged 1,810,515.6 from 1986-87 through 1988-89 and clearly reflect the strong influence of the ethnic mix of Chicago District #299's enrollments over the period. For example, the percentage of Hispanics in the state total (8.6%) was 65.4% greater than the highest percentage of this ethnic group in any of the three groupings (5.2% in Group I). Similarly, the percentage of Black students in the state total (22.3%) during the period was 54.7% greater than the proportion of this ethnicity in Group I, which was composed of the highest percentage of Blacks of the three groupings of special education service units.

Special Education Ethnicity

Illustrated in Figure 6 are the differences in the ethnic compositions of the special education populations aged 3-21 in the three groupings of service units, Chicago District #299 and the state totals for 1986-87 through 1988-89.

Figure 6
Ethnic Composition of Special Education Populations Aged 3-21
by District/Joint Agreement Groupings for 1986-87 - 1988-89



* Group 1: 29 Smallest Districts' Enrollments
** Group II: 30 Middle-Sized Districts' Enrollments
*** Group III: 29 Largest Districts' Enrollments

The ethnic compositions of public school enrollments of the three groups of service units were replicated in the ethnic mix of the groups' special education populations. That is, Group I service units, which averaged 958.5 students, had the highest percentages of Black and Hispanic students receiving special education services of the three groups, while Group II service units, which averaged 1,782.9 students, recorded the highest percentage of White students in the population being served. Group III service units, which averaged 3,864.4 students, had the highest percentage of "other" ethnic groups served in special education programs and the ethnic composition of Chicago District #299's special education programs, which averaged 44,098 students over the period, again heavily influenced the statewide totals, which averaged 238,426.3 students.

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It is interesting to note that the percentages of students enrolled who were served in special education programs did not significantly differ among the groupings of service units during the three years examined, ranging from 14.0% to 14.1% (Table 8). The statewide average for the period was 13.2% and Chicago District #299 recorded a 10.5% average. Although the rates of placing students in special education programs greatly varied among the individual service units that composed the three groupings, ranging from 9.9% to 22.0%, as already noted, the rates of placements of students in special education programs did not differ significantly among the three groupings of special education service units, therefore, it is not possible to determine possible relationships between the rates of placements of students in special education and the ethnic distribution of these populations.

However, by comparing the ethnic composition of students enrolled to the ethnicity of the special education populations in each grouping of service units, tentative conclusions can be drawn regarding possible relationships between the size of school district enrollments and the ethnic distribution of the student population served in special education. Based on data from the 1986-87 through 1988-89 period, it does appear that:

- White students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in smaller sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with greater enrollments.

- Black students are more likely to be placed in special education programs in smaller and intermediate sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with the largest enrollments.

- Hispanic students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in the largest sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with intermediate or smaller enrollments.

- Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students (the "other" ethnic category in Figures 5 and 6) are less likely than other ethnic groups to be placed in special education programs in service units of any enrollment size.

- Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in larger sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with smaller enrollments.

- White students clearly composed a disproportionately high percentage of the special education population in Chicago District #299, while Hispanics and Asians and American Indians/Alaskan natives composed disproportionately low percentages of students served in special education programs.

While the data indicate that these tentative conclusions may be warranted, as previously noted, comparing the ethnic composition of enrollments to the percentages of each ethnic group in the special education populations can lead to inappropriate conclusions regarding possible overrepresentation or underrepresentation of one or more ethnic groups since each ethnic group's percentage of the total population is directly related to the relative percentages of the other ethnic groups. That is, significant underrepresentation of one ethnic group will make the proportions of the other ethnic groups in the special education population greater than they would have been had the underrepresented ethnicity's

representation in special education been more nearly equal to their percentage of enrollments. Still, although inappropriate conclusions can be readily drawn, this methodology does have merit in that it identifies differences in the ethnic composition of school enrollments and ethnic special education programs. The reasons for any disproportionality need to be identified rather than assumed.

For the three-year period that was examined, special education service units that served the smallest student enrollments were less likely to place White students in special education programs than service units with larger student enrollments. White students in Group I composed 74.2% of the special education population as compared to 78.9% of enrollments, a 6.0% lower proportion of the special education population than enrollments. White students composed a smaller percentage of students in special education programs (85.6%) than of enrollments (87.3%) in Group II as well, but the percentage difference between the ethnic group's relative proportions of two populations fell to only 1.9%. As a group, the service units with the largest enrollments in elementary and secondary education (Group III) achieved a balance between the percentages of White students in of total enrollments (82.1%) and the special education population (82.5%). It should be noted, however, that although the service units that composed Group III achieved proportionality in the percentages of White students of enrollments and the special education population, individual districts and joint agreements in this group had rates of placing White students in special education that ranged from 10.4% to 30.3% (Tables 9, 10 and 11).

Black students in Group I composed only 14.7% of enrollments but represented 20.2% of the special education population, a 37.4% higher proportion of the special education population than enrollments. Approximately the same relationship between this ethnic group's percentages of enrollments and the special education population existed in Group II, a 34.7% greater proportion of the special education population than enrollments. Although the proportion of the special education population was 14.3% greater than the percentage of enrollments and therefore proportionality wasn't achieved, service units with the largest enrollments again produced a better balance between the proportions that Black students were of enrollments (11.2%) and the special education population (12.8%).

For 1986-87 through 1988-89, Hispanic students aged 3-21 in Group II composed the same proportion (3.1%) of enrollments and the special education population. This ethnic group was also relatively proportionally represented in the Group I special education population (4.9%) compared to enrollments (5.2%), but the grouping of service units with the largest enrollments (Group III) had a significantly lower proportion of students in special education than of enrollments, a 10.5% difference between the two measures. Statewide, Hispanics composed a 30.2% lower percentage of the special education population than enrollments, heavily influenced by the disproportionately low proportion of Chicago District #299's special education population that this ethnic group represented (16.6%) compared to enrollments (24.1%).

On a statewide basis, the combined ethnic category of Asians and American Indians/Alaskan natives ("other") composed less than half of the proportion of the special education population (1.2%) that it did of enrollments (2.5%). Again, the state totals were strongly influenced by a 138.5% difference in the proportions this combination of ethnic groups represented of Chicago District #299's special education population (1.3%) and elementary and secondary education enrollments (3.1%). It should be noted, that as a group, the representation of Asians and

American Indians/Alaskan natives in special education programs was disproportionately lower than the group's proportion of enrollments in each of the three groupings of districts and joint agreements. The percentage differences between this combined ethnic group's proportions of enrollments and students in special education programs were substantial in each grouping of service units, ranging from 38.5% in Group I to 53.6% in Group III. Analysis of the data clearly suggests that the Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students are less likely to be placed in special education programs as the size of enrollments increase.

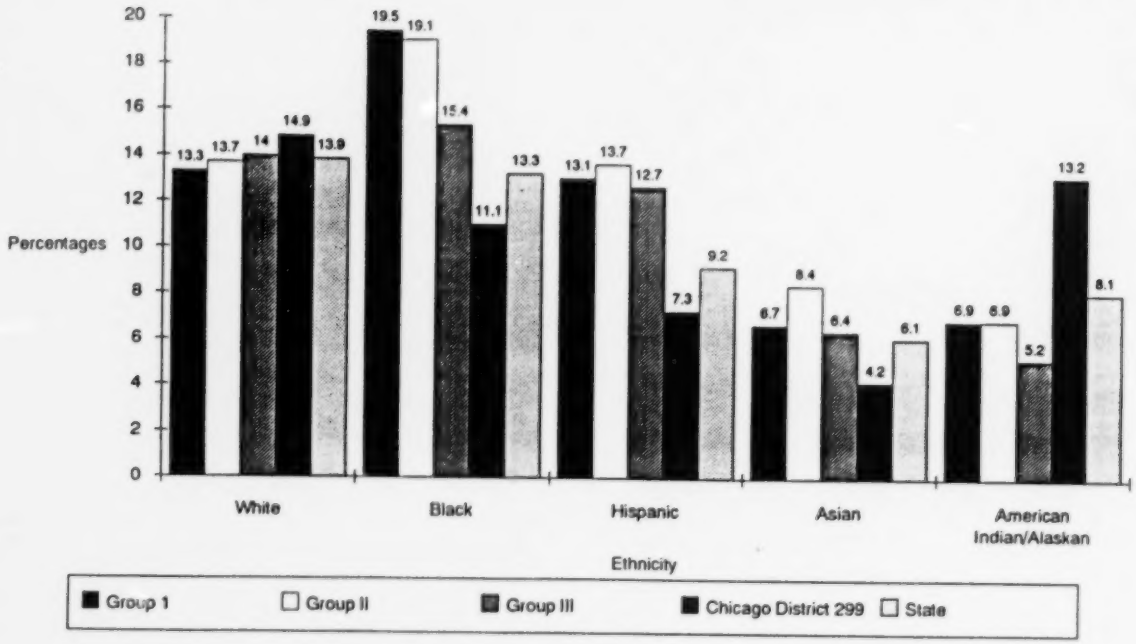
Note: Although this analysis does indicate that the size of a school districts' student population may influence ethnic placements in special education, caution should be exercised in interpreting these findings since population size **may be** a proxy for other variables such as wealth, education level of the adult population and others. Other than ethnicity, however, this analysis did not examine other demographic characteristics of the three groupings of school districts by size of populations.

Percentages of Ethnic Groups Placed in Special Education Differ

Comparing the percentages of each ethnic group's total population of elementary and secondary education students aged 3-21 who were served in special education programs from 1986-87 through 1988-89 provides a simple measure of ethnic disproportionality. Analysis of the variations in percentages of each ethnic group that were placed in special education programs over this period confirms the patterns of ethnic disproportionality that were suggested as a result of the comparisons of percentages of enrollments to percentages of the special education population for each ethnicity.

Statewide, on a percentage basis, more White students were served in special education than any other ethnic group for the period 1986-87 through 1988-89. As shown in Figure 7, 13.9% of all White students aged 3-21 who were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools were served in special education programs, a rate which was more than double that of Asian students (6.1%), 51.1% greater than that of Hispanic students (9.2%), 71.6% greater than the percentage of American Indians/Alaskan natives (8.1%) and 4.5% greater than the percentage of Blacks (13.3%) in special education. It is interesting to note that, although a higher percentage of White students were placed in special education than any other ethnic group statewide, none of the three groupings of districts and joint agreements recorded similar results.

Figure 7
Percentages of Ethnic Populations Aged 3-21 in Special Education
Service Units Grouped by Enrollment Size for 1986-1987 - 1988-89



For the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, Black students were placed in special education programs in each of the three groupings of service units at higher rates than any other ethnic group (Table 12). As shown in Figure 7, in the service units with the fewest students enrolled (Group I), 19.5% of the Black students were placed in special education programs, a rate which was 46.6% greater than the percentage of White students served in special education and 48.9% greater than that of Hispanic students. In Group I, Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students were placed in special education at slightly less than a third of the rate of that of Black students.

In Group II, the service units with moderate-sized enrollments, 19.1% of the Black students enrolled were served in special education programs compared to 13.7%, 13.7%, 8.4% and 6.9% respectively of the White, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native student populations. In Group III, 15.4% of the Blacks were placed in special education, a rate that was significantly less than the percentages of this ethnic group that were placed in special education Group I and Group II, but greater by 10.0%, 21.3%, 140.6%, and 196.2% than the rates respectively for White, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students.

As previously noted, the ethnic composition of Chicago District #299's special education population had a strong influence on statewide totals. As shown in Figure 7, 14.9% of White students enrolled were placed in special education compared to 11.5% of Black students, a 34.2% difference between the two proportions which contributed heavily to a greater percentage of White students served in special education than Black students statewide. The District's 7.3% rate of placing Hispanic students in special education was significantly lower than the percentages of this ethnic group that were placed in special education programs in Group I (13.1%), Group II (13.7%) and Group III (12.7%) and was the primary factor in producing the statewide percentage (9.2%) which was significantly lower than the percentages of White (13.9%) and Black (13.3%) students in special education.

Only 4.2% of Chicago District #299's Asian students were served in special education over the three year period. By combining Chicago's Asian special education population with those of this ethnicity who were served in special education programs in the three groupings of service units, the resultant statewide rate was 6.1%, which was less than the placement rates in Group I (6.7%), Group II (8.4%), and Group III (6.4%). Similarly, as a result of the District's comparatively high rate (13.2%) of placing American Indian/Alaskan native students in special education programs, the statewide percentage of this ethnic group in special education programs (8.1%) was significantly higher than the percentages of students with this ethnicity in special education programs in Group I (6.9%), Group II (6.9%), and Group III (5.2%).

Percentage of Ethnic Groups in Special Education Greatly Varied Among Service Units

As previously discussed, for the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the percentages of White students served in special education programs in the three groupings of special education service units ranged from 13.3% to 14.0% (Figure 7), a modest difference in the two rates of 5.2%. However, these rates, which are three-year averages derived from the combined totals of service units in two groupings of districts and joint agreements by size of enrollments, do not adequately reflect the remarkable differences that existed among service units in the percentages of White students (or any ethnicity) who were placed in special education. The rates of placements of White students in special education among individual districts and joint agreements in these groupings were significantly different during the three-year period, ranging from 7.9% to 30.4% (Tables 9, 10, and 11).

For 1986-87 through 1988-89, 13.3% of all Black students aged 3-21 who were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools were served in special education. However, during this same period, the rates of placements of Blacks in special education among the service units ranged from 0% to an eye-catching 53.7%! Similarly, 9.2% of Hispanic children and youth who were enrolled in public schools statewide were served in special education, but among districts and joint agreements the percentages ranged from 0% to 43.8%. Such dramatic differences in the ranges of placing Blacks and Hispanic students in special education across school districts are likely the result of a combination of each of the reasons discussed earlier regarding the causes of ethnic disproportionality.

While only 6.1% of Asian students were placed in special education programs statewide, the rates greatly varied among the service units, ranging from .8% to 21.1% during the period examined. Generally, most districts and joint agreements did not have a sufficient population of American Indians/Alaskan natives enrolled (50 or more) for analysis purposes due to potential statistical distortions created by the addition or deletion of only 1 student from the numbers of students enrolled and/or served in special education. However, in those service units that had 50 or more American Indian/Alaskan native students enrolled, the rates of placing this combined ethnic group in special education programs ranged from 0% to 13.2%, as compared to the 8.1% statewide average for the three-year period.

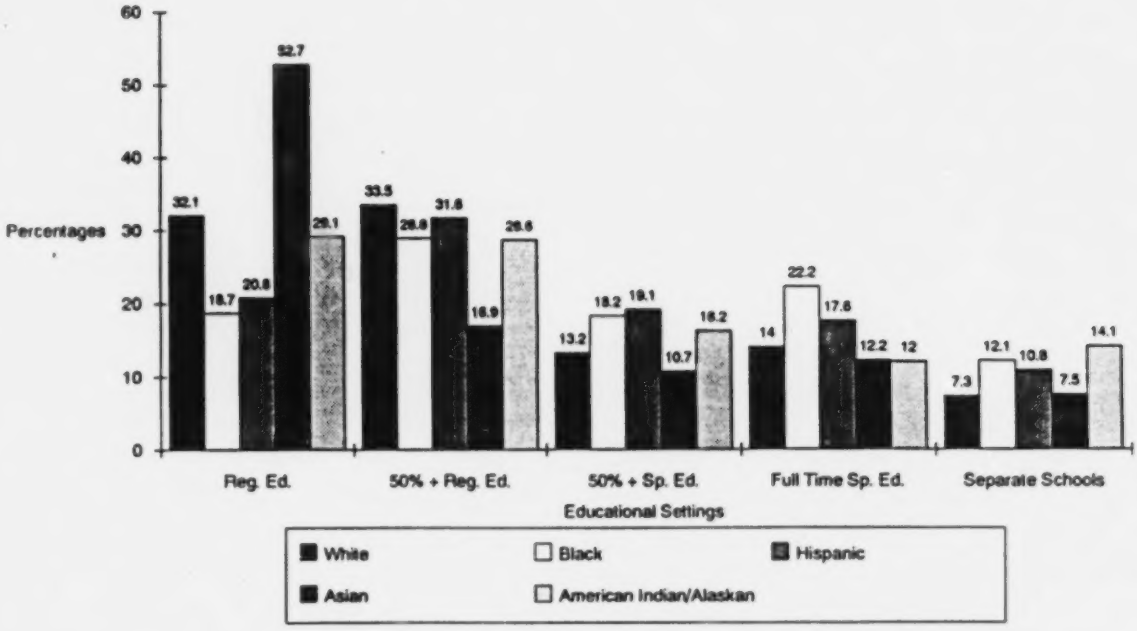
ETHNICITY AND LEAST RESTRICTIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PLACEMENTS

Based on statewide data for the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, the percentages of placements of students of different ethnic origins who have disabilities in alternative educational settings to receive special educational instruction and related services are not equal or nearly equal. Significantly different percentages of placements of the ethnic groups across the continuum of educational settings may indicate ethnic bias in placement criteria, but since the ethnic groups are not equally represented in special education (e.g. the percentage of White students served in special education from 1986-87 to 1988-89 was more than twice that of Asian students, 13.9% and 6.1% respectively.), the variations in percentages of placements across educational settings may be partially attributed to disproportionately small or large representations of ethnic groups in special education.

Although significant differences do exist in some of the percentages of the ethnic groups' representations in special education programs, there are some similarities in ethnic group representations in special education which permit comparisons of the patterns of placements in educational settings. For example, since the percentage of White (13.9%) and Black (13.3%) students served in special education from 1986-87 through 1988-89 were comparable, it would be expected that the patterns of placements of these ethnic groups would be similar across educational settings. Based on the same logic, placements of Hispanic (9.2%) and American Indian/Alaskan native (8.1%) students should be relatively comparable across the educational settings. With only 6.1% of the Asian population aged 3-21 in special education, the distribution of this ethnic group across educational settings could significantly vary from the placement patterns of other ethnic groups.

As shown in Figure 8, significant differences exist in the patterns of placing students aged 3-21 of different ethnic origins in alternative educational settings to receive special education and related services.

Figure 8
Percentages of Placements of Students Aged 3-21 in
Educational Settings by Ethnicity for 1985-86 - 1988-89



The analysis of least restrictive environment (LRE) placement patterns (Figures 8-11 and Tables 13-16) was restricted to the 1985-86 through 1988-89 period because some of the definitions of educational settings were different prior to 1985-86 and therefore would not have rendered comparable data. The educational settings that were selected for analysis were

1. full-time regular education classes;
2. regular education classes with less than 50% in special education classes;
3. special education classes with less than 50% in regular education classes;
4. full-time special education classes; and
5. separate schools, a composite of public and private day schools, public and private residential facilities, corrections facilities and home or hospital instruction.

From 1985-86 through 1988-89, a much greater percentage of White students with disabilities received special education services in full-time regular education classrooms (32.1%) than did Black students (18.7%). The percentage of White students placed in regular education classes with less than 50% in special education classes also exceeded that of Black students by 16.3% during the four-year period.

However, in the remaining three, more isolated, educational settings, the percentages of Black students exceeded those of White students by differences that ranged from 37.9% to 65.8%. Based on these data, it would appear that different criteria were used to determine placements across educational settings of the two ethnic groups or that Black students who are placed in special education are considered to have more severe disabling conditions than White students.

During this same period, American Indian/Alaskan native students with disabilities were placed in regular education classes and separate schools at significantly higher rates than were Hispanic students. The percentages of American Indian/Alaskan native students who received special education services in regular classrooms and separate schools exceeded the percentages of Hispanic students in these educational settings by 39.9% and 30.6% respectively. In the other three educational settings, the percentages of Hispanic students exceeded those of American Indian/Alaskan native students by differences that ranged from 10.5% (50+ regular education) to 46.7% (full-time special education classes). Again, the data suggest the possibility that different criteria were used to determine placements in educational settings of the two ethnic groups.

Due to their relatively small representations in special education programs compared to other ethnic groups, comparisons of placements of Asian students with other ethnic groups across educational settings is probably inappropriate. However, it is interesting to note that the Asian students who are served in special education predominantly receive these services in regular education classes. For the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, 52.7% of the Asian students aged 3-21 who had disabilities received special education in regular education classrooms. Since most Asian students (54.7%) received special education for speech and language impairments, the high percentage of placements in regular education classrooms was anticipated.

By the close of 1988-89, the percentage of Asian students with disabilities who were placed in regular education classrooms had declined by 8.9% from the 1985-86 level of 56.0%; however, at 51% this placement rate still greatly exceeded the placement rates of other ethnic groups (Table 13). Also declining over this same period were the percentages of White, Black and Hispanic students with disabilities who were served in regular education classrooms. The percentage of Hispanic students placed in regular education classes declined by 21.3% over the period, while the percentages of White and Black students placed in this educational setting declined by lesser amounts.

With the exception of Asian students, placements of students with disabilities into full-time special education classes also declined from 1985-86 through 1988-89 (Table 13). The percentage of Asian students placed in full-time special education classes increased from 11.7% in 1985-86 to 12.1% in 1988-89, but over this same four-year period, substantially smaller percentages of all other ethnic groups were served in this educational setting.

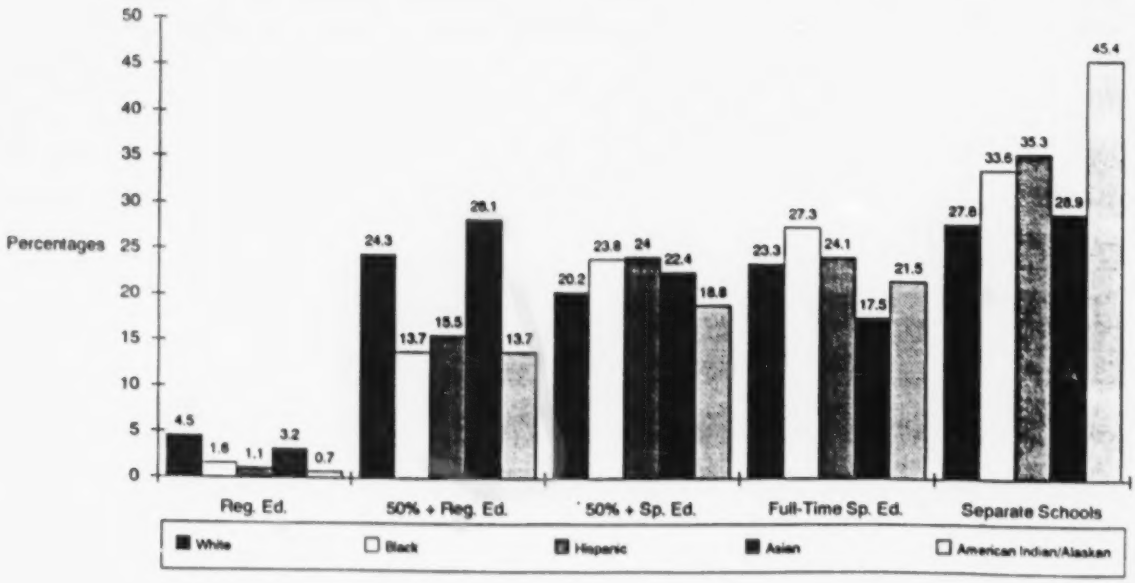
One of the strongest trends to emerge from this period was a sharp increase in the percentages of placements in special education classes with less than 50% in regular education classes. Over the four-year period, the percentages of placements of each ethnic group in this educational setting increased yearly from 1985-86 through 1988-89, ranging from 28.1% for White students (from 11.4% in 1985-86 to 14.6% in 1988-89) to 108.6% for American Indian/Alaskan native students (from 9.3% in 1985-86 to 19.4% in 1988-89).

Do Specific Disabilities Affect Ethnic Placements in Educational Settings?

Three categories of disabilities, seriously emotionally disturbed (SED), learning disabilities (LD), and educable mentally impaired (EMI), were selected to determine if students of different ethnic origins who have the same disabling conditions are placed equally across educational settings. Based on the data reported by the special education service units for the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, there are definite similarities in the patterns of placements of all students with these disabling conditions across educational settings; however, there are also significant differences in the percentages of placements of students of different ethnic origins in some educational settings.

For example, as shown in Figure 9, only a small percentage of students of any ethnicity whose primary disability was identified as being SED were served in regular education classes from 1985-86 through 1988-89, but White students (4.5%) were placed for special education services in this educational setting at a much higher percentage than Black (1.6%), Hispanic (1.1%), Asian (3.2%) or American Indian/Alaskan native (.7%) students. In addition, there were higher percentages of students in each ethnic group with this disability who were placed in separate schools than any other educational setting, but the percentage of American Indian/Alaskan native students (45.4%) placed in separate schools was almost double the percentage of White students placements in this setting (27.8%).

Figure 9
Percentages of Placements of Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students Aged 3-21 in Educational Settings by Ethnicity 1985-86 - 1988-89



For the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, a greater percentage of Asian students with SED disabilities were placed in the educational setting that provided for instruction in regular education classes for most of their school day than students of other ethnicities. For this period, 28.1% of the Asian students with SED disabilities

were placed in this educational setting, a rate that was more than twice the 13.7% rate of both Black and American Indian/Alaskan native students and 81.3% and 15.6% respectively greater than those of Hispanic and White students. However, by 1988-89, the percentage of White students with SED disabilities who were placed in this educational setting exceeded those of Asians and other ethnic groups (Table 14).

By the close of the four-year period that was examined, several trends had clearly emerged regarding placements of all students with SED disabilities across educational settings. As shown in Table 14, with very limited exceptions, students of all ethnicities who had this primary disability were increasingly being served in educational settings that were more isolated from regular education classes. The percentages of students with this disability who were placed in regular education classes sharply declined from 1985-86 through 1988-89. Across all ethnic groups, placements in regular education classes declined during the period from 4.2% to 2.4%. Placements in regular education classes for most of the school day were similarly reduced for each ethnic group during this period and declined across all groups from 21.9% of all placements in 1985-86 to 18.7% in 1988-89.

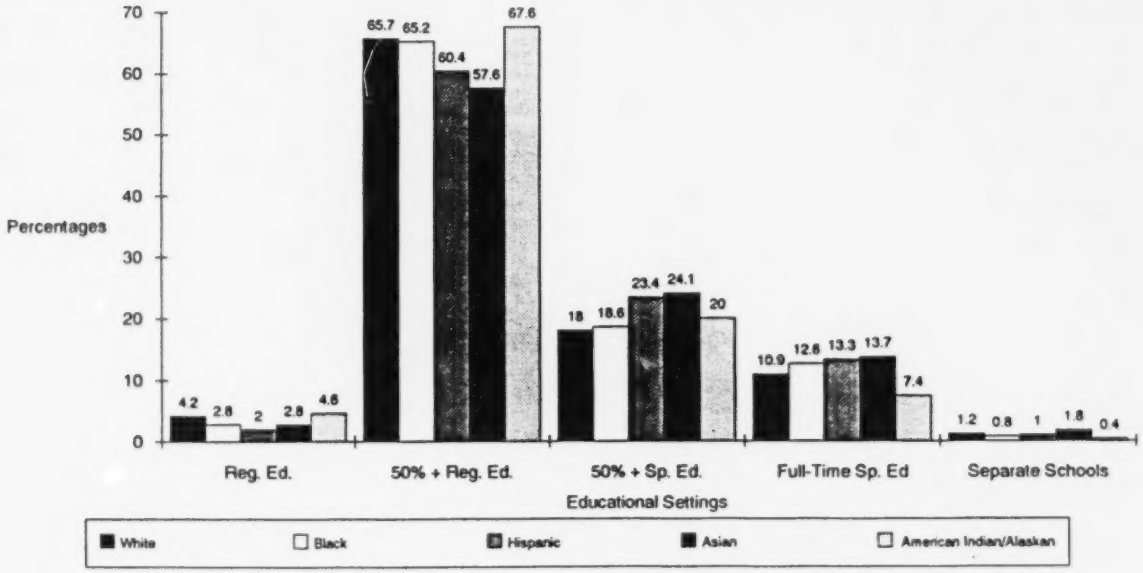
By 1988-89, greater percentages of students of every ethnicity who had SED disabilities were served in separate schools than in 1985-86. Over this period, the percentages of White, Black, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students with this disability who were placed in separate schools increased by 11.9%, 31.2%, 24.1%, 67.6% and 4.5% respectively, thereby making placements in separate schools the educational setting most frequently selected for all students with SED disabilities to receive special education services.

Also increasing from 1985-86 through 1988-89 were the percentages of Black, Hispanic and Asian students who were placed in full-time special education classes. As a result of increases during the period in the percentages of SED students placed in either separate schools or full-time special education classes, by the close of the 1988-89 school year, the percentages of students with this primary disability who were placed in these two educational settings ranged from 53.6% (Whites) to 66.8% (Blacks).

As shown in Figure 10, students of all ethnicities whose primary disability was identified as being LD were predominantly placed in regular education classes for 50% or more of their school day from 1985-86 through 1988-89; however, there were significant differences in the placement rates in this educational setting of American Indian/Alaskan native students compared to Asian and Hispanic students. For the four-year period, 67.6% of the American Indian/Alaskan native students who had a learning disability were served in regular education classes for most of their school day, a rate that was greater than those of Asian and Hispanic students by 17.4% and 11.9% respectively .

Of the remaining students with LD, most were placed in special education classes for most of their school day. Differences in the placements of students of different ethnic origins in this educational setting ranged from 24.1% of Asian students to 18.0% of White students, a difference of 33.9%. Fewer than 2% of the students with LD were placed in separate schools and fewer than 5% were served in full-time regular education classes. Although relatively few LD students of any ethnicity were placed in full-time regular education classes, the percentages of White (4.2%) and American Indian/Alaskan native (4.6%) students served in this educational setting were more than double that of Hispanic (2.0%) students.

Figure 10
Percentages of Placements of Students with Learning Disabilities Aged 3-21 in Educational Settings by Ethnicity 1985-86 - 1988-89

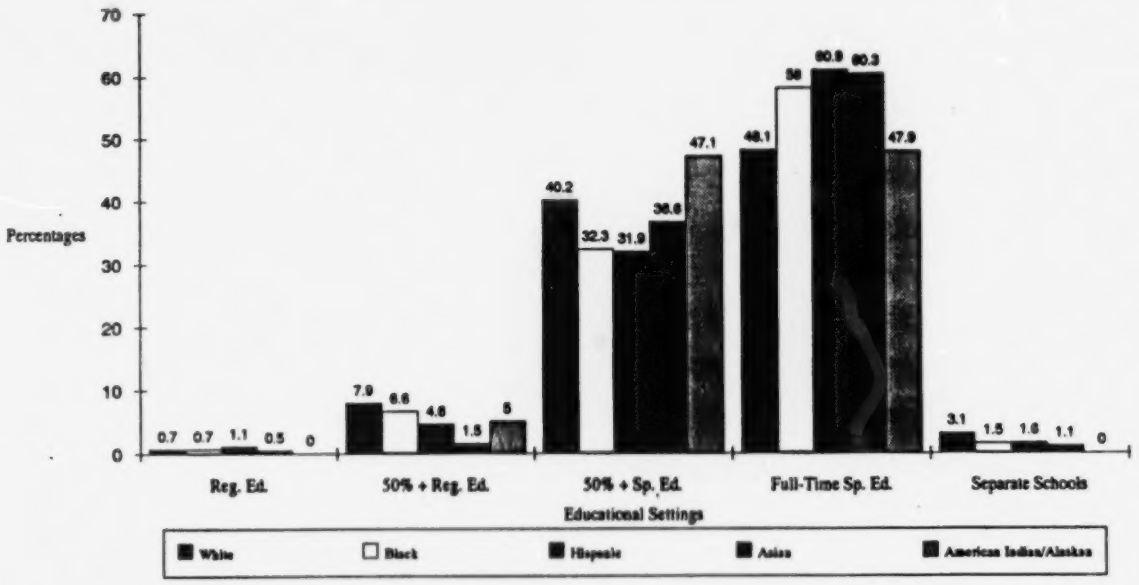


It is interesting to note that by 1988-89, students of all ethnicities whose primary disability was LD were increasingly being placed in special education classes for most of their school days (Table 15). Over the four-year period examined, the percentages of White, Black, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students with a learning disability who were placed in this educational setting increased by 30.7%, 14.9%, 74.5%, 28.2% and 225.3% respectively.

At the close of the 1988-89 school year, more than half of all students with LD were still being served in regular education classes for most of their school days, but compared to 1985-86, smaller percentages of each ethnic group were placed in this educational setting. Also declining during this period were the percentages of placements of all students with LD in full-time regular education classes and full-time special education classes. The declines in percentages of placements in full-time special education classes ranged from 35.0% (Blacks) to 11.0% (Whites).

Very few students who were educable mentally impaired during the 1985-86 through 1988-89 period were placed in full-time regular education classes or separate schools; most were served in full-time special education classes (Figure 11).

Figure 11
Percentages of Placements of Students Who were Educable Mentally Impaired Aged 3-21 in Educational Settings by Ethnicity 1985-86 - 1988-89



As shown in Figure 11, there were strong similarities in the placements across educational settings of all students whose primary disability was EMI during the four-year period examined, but significant differences existed in the percentages of placements of students of different ethnic origins in most educational settings. Although only 7.9% of the White students with this disability (EMI) were placed in regular education classes for most of their school day, this placement rate was 426.7% and 71.7% greater respectively than those of Asian (1.5%) and Hispanic (4.6%) students. Similarly, the percentage of White students with this disability who were placed in separate schools was only 3.1%, but this placement rate was from 93.8% to 181.8% greater than those of other ethnic groups.

Based on the placement data for the period examined, it is clear that American Indian/Alaskan native and White EMI students are much more likely to be placed in special education classes for most of their school days than are students of other ethnicities. During this period, 47.1% of American Indian/Alaskan native students and 40.2% of White students were served in this educational setting compared to 33.3%, 31.9% and 36.6% respectively of Black, Hispanic and Asian students. Not surprisingly, for the same period, greater percentages of Black (58.0%), Hispanic (60.9%), and Asian (60.3%) EMI students were served in full-time special education classes than White (48.1%) and American Indian/Alaskan native (47.9%) students.

By the close of 1988-89, two major trends were evident in the educational setting of placements of students aged 3-21 who were educable mentally impaired: smaller percentages of students of all ethnicities were being placed in regular education classes for most of their school day, while larger percentages of students with this disability were being served in special education classes for most of their school day. From 1985-86 through 1988-89, the percentages of White, Black, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native EMI students placed in regular education classes for most of their school day declined by 36.8%, 69.3%, 76.3%, 32.0% and 100.0% respectively, while percentage increases in placements of students in special education classes for most of their school day ranged from 1.8% (White) to 123.3% (American Indian/Alaskan native).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on analyses of special education child count and educational setting placement data provided by the Illinois State Board of Education's Special Education Funding and Child Tracking System (FACTS) and the Fall Housing Report for the period 1979-80 through 1988-89, it is clear that:

- The ethnic composition of the special education population is disproportional to the ethnic composition of enrollments of students aged 3-21 in the public elementary and secondary education system.

- Ethnic origin appears to be a variable related to placements of students aged 3-21 with disabilities in educational settings to receive special education and related services.

While the disproportionate representation of ethnic groups in special education programs is likely the result of culturally biased methods of measuring need for special education services, non-uniform applications of ethnically neutral and subject-relevant program entrance criteria, nondistinct eligibility criteria for special education services of two or more categories of disabilities, extended effects of poverty or some combination of these processes, the data collected for these analyses were only relevant to determination of proportional relationships of ethnic groups in special education programs compared to enrollments in the public education system and therefore did not yield any clues regarding causes of disproportionality. Similarly, although it appears that different criteria were probably used to determine placements across educational settings of students of different ethnic origins, the data available on educational setting placements are pertinent only to the determination of the proportional relationships of students of different ethnic origins who are served in alternative educational settings compared to their percentages of the special education population or enrollments and, therefore, are of little value in exploring possible ethnic bias in placement criteria. It is possible, for example, that certain ethnic groups are more severely disabled due to some undetermined cause or causes and therefore disproportional placements in educational settings would be warranted. Data available do not address this potential issue.

Included in the general findings of the analyses of the ethnic distribution of the special education population aged 3-21 and placements of this student population across alternative educational settings are:

- Based on comparisons of the ethnic compositions of public elementary and secondary education enrollments and the special education populations from 1979-80 through 1988-89, disproportionality exists in the percentages of students of different ethnic origins who receive special education and related services.

- Substantial changes in the ethnic composition of school enrollments over the past decade have done little to improve ethnic proportionality and the special education population.

- Student placements were not made among special education programs in proportion to the ethnic composition of the public school enrollments for the decade that was examined.

- For the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the percentages of students of different ethnic origins who were served in special education programs varied substantially, thereby insuring ethnic disproportionality in the special education population compared to enrollments. For this period, 13.9% of all White students aged 3-21 who were enrolled in the public elementary and secondary schools were served in special education programs, a rate which was more than double that of Asian students (6.1%), 51.1% greater than that of Hispanic students (9.2%), 71.6% greater than the percentage of American Indians/Alaskan natives (8.1%) and 4.5% greater than the percentage of Blacks (13.3%) in special education.

- Based on analysis of data for the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, it appears that the size of enrollments of districts or joint agreements affects the probable selections of students of different ethnic origins to receive special education and related services. Additional analysis appears warranted to determine if school district size may serve as a proxy for wealth, educational levels of the adult populations or some other demographic characteristic.

- Based on data for the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, it appears that some form of ethnic bias is involved in placements across alternative educational settings of students of different ethnic origins who have disabilities.

- Based on data for the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, it appears that some form of ethnic bias is involved in placements across alternative educational settings of students of different ethnic origins who have the same disability.

Findings of ethnic disproportionality in the numbers of students served in special education and placements in alternative educational settings that focused on one or more ethnic groups include:

White Students

- Although the number of White students enrolled in public elementary and secondary education schools declined by 19.2% from 1979-80 through 1988-89, the percentage of the special education population who were White stayed about the same, declining by only 1.0%.

- White students composed 68.8% of enrollments and 71.2% of the special education population.

- For the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the percentages of White students who were placed in special education ranged from 7.9% to 30.4% across the school districts and joint agreements.

- By the end of the decade, the rate of placements of White students (14.0%) in special education exceeded the rate of placements of Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and American Indians/Alaskan natives by 7.7%, 55.6%, 137.3% and 84.2% respectively.

- Over the decade, White students composed only 46.8% of the students whose primary disability was educable mentally impaired compared to 68.8% of public school enrollments.

- Based on data from 1986-87 through 1988-89, it appears that White students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in smaller sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with greater enrollments.

- From 1985-86 through 1988-89, a much greater percentage of White students with disabilities (32.1%) received special education services in full-time regular education classes than did Black students (18.7%).

- Over the same four-year period, 7.9% of White students whose primary disability was educable mentally impaired were placed in regular education classes for most of their school day, a placement rate that was greater than those of Asian (1.5%) and Hispanic (4.6%) students by 426.7% and 71.7% respectively.

Black Students

- The number of Black students enrolled declined by 5.7% over the decade, while the percentage of the special education population who were Black declined by 7.9%.

- Black students composed 21.7% of enrollments over the decade and 22.5% of the special education population; however, by the close of the 1988-89 school year, the percentages of this ethnic group of enrollments (22.2%) and the special education population (22.0%) were nearly equal.

- For the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the percentages of Black students who were placed in special education ranged from 0% to 53.7% across the special education service units.

- Over the decade, Black students composed 47.8% of the students whose primary disability was educable mentally impaired compared to 21.7% of public school enrollments.

- Based on data from 1986-87 through 1988-89, it appears that Black students are more likely to be placed in special education programs in smaller and intermediate sized service units than in those with large enrollments.

- From 1985-86 through 1988-89, the percentage of Black students placed in separate schools exceeded the percentage of White students placed in this educational setting by 65.8%.

Hispanic Students

- Hispanic student enrollments increased by 32.0% over the decade and this ethnic group recorded the strongest percentage gains of any ethnicity in the special education population, increasing by 66.5%.

- For the decade, the proportion of Hispanics of total enrollments (7.4%) was 45.1% greater than their percentage of the special education population (5.1%).

- For the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the percentages of Hispanic students who were placed in special education ranged from 0% to 43.8% across school districts and joint agreements.

- From 1986-87 through 1988-89, the primary disability of most Hispanics, Whites, Blacks and American Indians/Alaskan natives was a learning disability (LD), with 47.5%, 45.0%, 38.5% and 34.5% respectively of their special education populations in this disability program.

- Based on 1986-87 through 1988-89 data, it appears that Hispanic students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in large sized districts and joint agreements than in service units with moderate or small enrollments.

Asian Students

- Over the decade, Asian enrollments recorded the strongest gains of any ethnicity, increasing by over 75%. However, the number of Asian students in special education increased by only 16.1%, a pattern which greatly reduced the already significantly lower percentage of this ethnic group who have been served in special education compared to other ethnic groups.

- The proportion of Asians of total enrollments (2.0%) over the decade was 66.7% greater than their percentage of the special education population (1.2%).

- For the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the percentages of Asian students who were placed in special education ranged from .8% to 21.1% across the special education service units.

- From 1986-87 through 1988-89, speech and language impairment was the primary disability of 54.8% of all Asians served in special education, a rate that respectively was 181.0% and 152.5% greater than the proportions of Blacks and Hispanics with this primary disability.

- Based on 1986-87 through 1988-89 data, it appears that Asian and American Indian/Alaskan native students are less likely to be placed in special education programs in larger sized school districts and joint agreements than in service units with smaller enrollments.

- For the period 1985-86 through 1988-89, 52.7% of the Asian students with disabilities were placed in full-time regular education classes, which significantly exceeded the percentages of placements of other ethnic groups in this educational setting.

- Over this same period, 28.1% of Asian students with SED disabilities were placed in regular education classes for most of their school day, a placement rate that was more than twice the 13.7% rate of both Black and American Indian/Alaskan native students and greater than those of Hispanic and White students by 81.3% and 15.6% respectively.

American Indian/Alaskan Native Students

- Over the decade, the number of American Indian/Alaskan native student enrollments declined by 12.3% and the number of students with these ethnic origins who were served in special education declined by 18.7%, but the group's percentage of the special education population remained constant at .1%.

- American Indians/Alaskan natives began and ended the decade with .1% of both total enrollments and the special education population.

- For the period 1986-87 through 1988-89, the percentages of American Indian/Alaskan native students who were placed in special education ranged from 0% to 13.2% statewide.

- From 1986-87 through 1988-89, the primary disability of 24.0% of American Indians/Alaskan natives was SED, while only 6.6% and 10.0% of the Asian and White students respectively had this primary disability.

- From 1985-86 through 1988-89, the percentages of American Indian/Alaskan native students who received special education services in full-time regular classes and separate schools exceeded the percentages of Hispanic students in these educational settings by 39.7% and 30.6% respectively.

- Of the American Indian/Alaskan native students whose primary disability was seriously emotionally disturbed, 45.4% were placed in separate schools, a placement rate that exceeded those of White, Black, Hispanic and Asian students by 63.3%, 35.1%, 28.6% and 57.1% respectively.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1
AVERAGE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF TOTAL PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS, SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATION
AND SELECTED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS AGED 3 - 21
1979-80 - 1988-89

			White Pop.			Black Pop.			Hispanic Pop.			Asian Pop.			Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop.		
Educational Program	Decade Average Totals	% +\- Over Decade	Decade Average	% of Total Pop.	% +\- Over Decade	Decade Average	% of Total Pop.	% +\- Over Decade	Decade Average	% of Total Pop.	% +\- Over Decade	Decade Average	% of Total Pop.	%+\- Over Decade	Decade Average	% of Total Pop.	% +\- Over Decade
Public School Enrollment	1,877,645.8	(12.2%)	1,291,219.0	68.8%	(19.2%)	407,613.0	21.7%	(5.7%)	139,103.6	7.4%	32.0%	37,473.6	2.0%	75.6%	2,236.6	.1%	(12.3%)
Special Ed. Programs Population	239,978.4	(9.5%)	170,824.6	71.2%	.0%	53,877.0	22.5%	(6.9%)	12,271.9	5.1%	66.5%	2,760.9	1.2%	16.1%	244.0	.1%	(18.7%)
Seriously Emotionally Disturbed	28,341.7	(6.3%)	17,892.8	63.1%	(10.1%)	8,901.6	31.4%	(4.0%)	1,316.3	4.6%	32.2%	186.9	.7%	7.8%	44.1	.2%	30.0%
Educable Mentally Impaired	24,553.2	(50.7%)	11,488.2	46.8%	(49.2%)	11,742.9	47.8%	(55.2%)	1,203.0	4.9%	(13.7%)	100.8	.4%	95.0%	18.3	.1%	(66.7%)
Learning Disabled	94,740.5	33.5%	71,431.1	75.4%	24.1%	17,583.7	18.6%	47.1%	5,119.9	5.4%	180.7%	515.9	.5%	84.2%	89.9	.1%	(8.7%)

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TABLE 2
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21 SERVED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
AND PERCENT PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS FOR YEARS 1979-80 THROUGH 1988-89

	White Pop.			Black Pop.			Hispanic Pop.			Asian Pop.			Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop.		
School Year	Number	Percent Sp. Ed.	Pub. Sch. Enr. Ethnicity (%)	Number	Percent Sp. Ed.	Pub. Sch. Enr. Ethnicity (%)	Number	Percent Sp. Ed.	Pub. Sch. Enr. Ethnicity (%)	Number	Percent Sp. Ed.	Pub. Sch. Enr. Ethnicity (%)	Number	Percent Sp. Ed.	Pub. Sch. Enr. Ethnicity (%)
1979-80	166,738	71.4%	72.0%	55,749	23.9%	20.7%	8,596	3.7%	5.9%	2,280	1.0%	1.3%	203	.1%	.1%
1980-81	179,823	75.2%	71.2%	47,212	19.7%	20.9%	8,775	3.7%	6.3%	2,950	1.2%	1.6%	302	.1%	.1%
1981-82	176,238	72.3%	70.2%	52,923	21.7%	21.2%	11,220	4.6%	6.7%	2,670	1.1%	1.8%	548	.2%	.1%
1982-83	175,293	70.6%	69.5%	57,045	23.0%	21.5%	12,690	5.1%	7.0%	2,862	1.2%	1.9%	270	.1%	.1%
1983-84	172,256	71.4%	68.8%	53,578	22.2%	21.8%	12,368	5.1%	7.3%	2,986	1.2%	2.0%	201	.1%	.1%
1984-85	169,778	70.8%	68.0%	54,292	22.6%	22.1%	12,670	5.3%	7.7%	2,947	1.2%	2.1%	191	.1%	.1%
1985-86	165,926	69.5%	67.4%	56,135	23.5%	22.3%	13,737	5.8%	8.0%	2,860	1.2%	2.2%	193	.1%	.1%
1986-87	167,894	69.6%	66.9%	56,028	23.2%	22.4%	14,263	5.9%	8.3%	2,730	1.1%	2.3%	181	.1%	.1%
1987-88	167,551	70.3%	66.6%	53,891	22.6%	22.3%	14,089	5.9%	8.5%	2,678	1.1%	2.4%	186	.1%	.1%
1988-89	166,749	70.7%	66.3%	51,917	22.0%	22.2%	14,311	6.1%	8.9%	2,646	1.1%	2.5%	165	.1%	.1%
Decade Average	170,824.6	71.2%	68.8%	53,877.0	22.5%	21.7%	12,271.9	5.1%	7.4%	2,760.9	1.2%	2.0%	244.0	.1%	.1%

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE BY ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OF TOTAL ENROLLMENTS
1979-80 - 1988-89

Year	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Ind./Alaskan
1979-80	11.3%	13.2%	7.1%	8.7%	8.2%
1980-81	12.7%	11.4%	7.0%	9.6%	13.6%
1981-82	13.0%	13.0%	8.7%	7.9%	24.0%
1982-83	13.4%	14.1%	9.6%	7.9%	12.3%
1983-84	13.5%	13.3%	9.1%	8.2%	9.4%
1984-85	13.6%	13.4%	9.0%	7.7%	8.6%
1985-86	13.5%	13.8%	9.4%	7.1%	8.5%
1986-87	13.8%	13.7%	9.5%	6.4%	8.1%
1987-88	13.9%	13.3%	9.1%	6.1%	8.7%
1988-89	14.0%	13.0%	9.0%	5.9%	7.6%
Decade Average	13.3%	13.2%	8.8%	7.6%	10.9%

TABLE 4
ETHNIC COMPOSITION BY PRIMARY DISABILITY OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21 FOR YEARS 1979-80 THROUGH 1988-89
- SERIOUSLY EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED -

School Year	White Pop. Number	White Pop. % of Disabl.	White Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Black Pop. Number	Black Pop. % of Disabl.	Black Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Hispanic Pop. Number	Hispanic Pop. % of Disabl.	Hispanic Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Asian Pop. Number	Asian Pop. % of Disabl.	Asian Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop. Number	Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop. % of Disabl.	Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %
1979-80	17,973	63.6%	72.0%	8,955	31.7%	20.7%	1,117	4.0%	5.9%	165	.6%	1.3%	30	.1%	.1%
1980-81	20,067	71.9%	71.2%	6,671	23.9%	20.9%	863	3.1%	6.3%	217	.8%	1.6%	81	.3%	.1%
1981-82	19,120	66.5%	70.2%	8,267	28.8%	21.2%	1,170	4.1%	6.7%	139	.5%	1.8%	58	.2%	.1%
1982-83	18,470	61.5	69.5%	9,937	33.1%	21.5%	1,405	4.7%	7.0%	171	.6%	1.9%	37	.1%	.1%
1983-84	18,369	62.6%	68.8%	9,337	31.8%	21.8%	1,363	4.6%	7.3%	222	.8%	2.0%	41	.1%	.1%
1984-85	17,727	61.3%	68.0%	9,567	33.1%	22.1%	1,352	4.7%	7.7%	245	.8%	2.1%	36	.1%	.1%
1985-86	17,145	59.8%	67.4%	9,899	34.6%	22.3%	1,441	5.0%	8.0%	176	.6%	2.2%	30	.1%	.1%
1986-87	17,275	61.6%	66.9%	9,048	32.2%	22.4%	1,520	5.4%	8.3%	178	.6%	2.3%	40	.1%	.1%
1987-88	16,624	61.5%	66.6%	8,740	32.3%	22.3%	1,455	5.4%	8.5%	177	.7%	2.4%	49	.2%	.1%
1988-89	16,158	61.1%	66.3%	8,595	32.5%	22.2%	1,477	5.6%	8.9%	179	.7%	2.5%	39	.1%	.1%
Decade Average	17,892.8	63.1%	68.8%	8,901.6	31.4%	21.7%	1,316.3	4.6%	7.4%	186.9	.7%	2.0%	44.1	.2%	.1%

TABLE 5
ETHNIC COMPOSITION BY PRIMARY DISABILITY OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21 FOR YEARS 1979-80 THROUGH 1988-89
- EDUCABLE MENTALLY IMPAIRED -

	White Pop.			Black Pop.			Hispanic Pop.			Asian Pop.			Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop.		
School Year	Number	% of Disabl.	Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Number	% of Disabl.	Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Number	% of Disabl.	Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Number	% of Disabl.	Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Number	% of Disabl.	Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %
1979-80	15,738	47.1%	72.0%	16,467	49.3%	20.7%	1,136	3.4%	5.9%	60	.2%	1.3%	18	.1%	.1%
1980-81	15,900	49.5%	71.2%	14,821	46.1%	20.9%	1,219	3.8%	6.3%	174	.5%	1.6%	36	.1%	.1%
1981-82	14,194	46.1%	70.2%	14,937	48.6%	21.2%	1,479	4.8%	6.7%	102	.3%	1.8%	52	.2%	.1%
1982-83	12,876	45.3%	69.5%	13,965	49.2%	21.5%	1,440	5.1%	7.0%	100	.4%	1.9%	26	.1%	.1%
1983-84	11,226	46.0%	68.8%	11,775	48.3%	21.8%	1,293	5.3%	7.3%	80	.3%	2.0%	13	.1%	.1%
1984-85	10,056	45.5%	68.0%	10,776	48.8%	22.1%	1,169	5.3%	7.7%	83	.4%	2.1%	12	.1%	.1%
1985-86	9,335	45.5%	67.4%	9,945	48.4%	22.3%	1,157	5.6%	8.0%	81	.4%	2.2%	10	.0%	.1%
1986-87	9,042	46.5%	66.9%	9,171	47.2%	22.4%	1,132	5.8%	8.3%	98	.5%	2.3%	6	.0%	.1%
1987-88	8,521	47.7%	66.6%	8,191	45.9%	22.3%	1,025	5.7%	8.5%	113	.6%	2.4%	4	.0%	.1%
1988-89	7,994	48.5%	66.3%	7,381	44.8%	22.2%	980	5.9%	8.9%	117	.7%	2.5%	6	.0%	.1%
Decade Average	11,488.2	46.8%	68.8%	11,742.9	47.8%	21.7%	1,203.0	4.9%	7.4	100.8	.4%	2.0%	18.3	.1%	.1%

TABLE 6
ETHNIC COMPOSITION BY PRIMARY DISABILITY OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21 FOR YEARS 1979-80 THROUGH 1988-89
- LEARNING DISABLED -

School Year	White Pop. Number	White Pop. % of Disabl.	White Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Black Pop. Number	Black Pop. % of Disabl.	Black Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Hispanic Pop. Number	Hispanic Pop. % of Disabl.	Hispanic Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Asian Pop. Number	Asian Pop. % of Disabl.	Asian Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %	Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop. Number	Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop. % of Disabl.	Amer. Ind./ Alaskan Pop. Pub. Sch. Enroll. Ethn. %
1979-80	61,639	78.4%	72.0%	14,024	17.8%	20.7%	2,530	3.2%	5.9%	317	.4%	1.3%	69	.1%	.1%
1980-81	68,283	80.3%	71.2%	13,077	15.4%	20.9%	3,066	3.6%	6.3%	548	.6%	1.6%	113	.1%	.1%
1981-82	70,115	77.8%	70.2%	15,290	17.0%	21.2%	4,168	4.6%	6.7%	405	.4%	1.8%	169	.2%	.2%
1982-83	71,525	75.9%	69.5%	17,213	18.3%	21.5%	4,938	5.2%	7.0%	480	.5%	1.9%	122	.1%	.1%
1983-84	72,208	76.3%	68.8%	16,829	17.8%	21.8%	4,972	5.3%	7.3%	555	.6%	2.0%	82	.1%	.1%
1984-85	72,339	75.3%	68.0%	17,823	18.5%	22.1%	5,314	5.5%	7.7%	562	.6%	2.1%	77	.1%	.1%
1985-86	72,452	73.6%	67.4%	19,360	19.7%	22.3%	5,959	6.1%	8.0%	534	.5%	2.2%	84	.1%	.1%
1986-87	73,777	72.8%	66.9%	20,616	20.3%	22.4%	6,342	6.3%	8.3%	589	.6%	2.3%	61	.1%	.1%
1987-88	75,489	72.6%	66.6%	20,974	20.2%	22.3%	6,808	6.6%	8.5%	585	.6%	2.4%	59	.1%	.1%
1988-89	76,484	72.9%	66.3%	20,631	19.7%	22.2%	7,102	6.8%	8.9%	584	.6%	2.5%	63	.1%	.1%
Decade Average	71,431.1	75.4%	68.8%	17,583.7	18.6%	21.7%	5,119.9	5.4%	7.4%	515.9	.5%	2.0%	89.9	.1%	.1%

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TABLE 7
RANK ORDER OF PRIMARY DISABILITIES
BY ETHNICITY FOR STUDENTS AGED 3-21
1986-87 - 1988-89

Ethnicity	Rank 1 Disability	Rank 1 % in Category	Rank 2 Disability	Rank 2 % in Category	Rank 3 Disability	Rank 3 % in Category	Rank 4 Disability	Rank 4 % in Category
1986-87								
White	LD	43.9%	S/LI	33.2%	SED	10.3%	EMI	5.4%
Black	LD	36.8%	S/LI	20.2%	EMI	16.4%	SED	16.1%
Hispanic	LD	44.5%	S/LI	23.8%	SED	10.6%	EMI	7.9%
Asian	S/LI	56.0%	LD	21.6%	SED	6.5%	TMI	4.4%
Amer. Ind./Alaskan	LD	33.7%	S/LI	29.3%	SED	22.1%	TMI	5.0%
1987-88								
White	LD	45.1%	S/LI	32.7%	SED	9.9%	EMI	5.1%
Black	LD	38.9%	S/LI	19.2%	SED	16.2%	EMI	15.2%
Hispanic	LD	48.3%	S/LI	21.1%	SED	10.3%	EMI	7.3%
Asian	S/LI	54.8%	LD	21.8%	SED	6.6%	TMI	4.3%
Amer. Ind./Alaskan	LD	31.7%	S/LI	31.7%	SED	26.3%	TMI	3.8%
1988-89								
White	LD	45.9%	S/LI	32.5%	SED	9.7%	EMI	4.8%
Black	LD	39.7%	S/LI	19.1%	SED	16.5%	EMI	14.2%
Hispanic	LD	49.6%	S/LI	20.2%	SED	10.3%	EMI	6.8%
Asian	S/LI	53.5%	LD	22.1%	SED	6.8%	EMI	4.4%
Amer. Ind./Alaskan	LD	38.2%	S/LI	27.3%	SED	23.6%	EMI	3.6%

Disability Abbreviations:

Educable Mentally Impaired (EMI)
Learning Disabled (LD)
Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED)
Speech and Language Impaired (S/LI)
Trainable Mentally Impaired (TMI)

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TABLE 8
COMPARISONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATIONS TO TOTAL ENROLLMENTS OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21 IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE UNITS GROUPED BY ENROLLMENT SIZE FOR 1986-87 - 1988-89

Service Units	Av. Enrollments	Average Special Ed Population	% Sp. Ed. of Enrollment	Range Among Service Units
1986-87				
Group I	6,811.2	963.5	14.2%	10.7% - 18.4%
Group II	12,817.3	1,752.5	13.7%	9.9% - 22.0%
Group III	27,659.0	3,896.4	14.1%	10.6% - 20.5%
*Chi. Dist. 299	431,298	46,807	10.9%	d/a
*State	1,825,185	241,096	13.2%	9.9% - 22.0%
1987-88				
Group I	6,807.5	953.3	14.0%	11.0% - 17.6%
Group II	12,769.2	1,806.6	14.2%	10.8% - 21.5%
Group III	27,614.3	3,857.9	14.0%	10.8% - 20.8%
*Chi. Dist. 299	419,537	43,528	10.4%	d/a
*State	1,811,446	238,395	13.2%	10.8% - 21.5%
1988-89				
Group I	6,762.8	958.7	14.2%	11.6% - 19.1%
Group II	12,675.0	1,789.6	14.1%	10.4% - 21.1%
Group III	27,512.2	3,839.7	14.0%	10.5% - 21.2%
*Chi. Dist. 299	410,230	41,959	10.2%	d/a
*State	1,794,916	235,788	13.1%	10.4% - 21.0%

*Actual

TABLE 9
COMPARISONS OF ETHNIC COMPOSITION
OF TOTAL DISTRICTS'/JOINT AGREEMENTS'
ENROLLMENTS AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATIONS OF STUDENTS
AGED 3-21 FOR 1986-87

Service Units	(A) % of Tot. Enrollment	(B) % of Special Education Population	% Dif. A of B	% Ethnic Group in Special Education	% Range Among Service Units
Ethnicity: White					
Group I	79.1%	74.0%	(6.4%)	13.3%	7.9% - 17.1%
Group II	89.7%	87.7%	(2.2%)	13.4%	9.7% - 19.1%
Group III	81.8%	81.5%	(.4%)	14.0%	10.4% - 24.6%
Chi. Dist. 299	13.5%	18.6%	37.8%	14.9%	d/a
State	66.8%	69.6%	4.2%	13.8%	7.9% - 24.6%
Ethnicity: Black					
Group I	14.5%	20.0%	37.9%	19.7%	12.5% - 41.6%
Group II	5.8%	8.4%	44.8%	19.9%	3.7% - 45.9%
Group III	11.8%	13.7%	16.1%	16.4%	2.7% - 33.0%
Chi. Dist. 299	60.2%	64.1%	6.5%	11.6%	d/a
State	22.4%	23.2%	3.6%	13.7%	2.7% - 45.9%
Ethnicity: Hispanic					
Group I	5.1%	5.0%	(2.0%)	13.2%	1.7% - 31.0%
Group II	2.6%	2.6%	.0%	13.7%	3.9% - 26.0%
Group III	3.7%	3.5%	(5.4%)	13.5%	1.8% - 19.5%
Chi. Dist. 299	23.3%	16.1%	(30.9%)	7.5%	d/a
State	8.3%	5.9%	(28.9%)	9.5%	1.7% - 31.0%
Ethnicity: Asian					
Group I	1.2%	1.0%	(1.7%)	7.6%	4.0% - 16.7%
Group II	1.8%	1.2%	(33.3%)	8.9%	4.0% - 17.0%
Group III	2.6%	1.3%	(50.0%)	6.9%	2.0% - 16.0%
Chi. Dist. 299	2.8%	1.0%	(64.3%)	4.0%	d/a
State	2.3%	1.1%	(52.2%)	6.4%	2.0% - 17.0%
Ethnicity: Amer. Ind./Alaskan					
Group I	.1%	.1%	.0%	5.4%	(insufficient pop.)
Group II	.1%	.0%	(100%)	8.4%	(insufficient pop.)
Group III	.1%	.1%	.0%	5.2%	1.8% - 12.8%
Chi. Dist. 299	.2%	.2%	.0%	13.3%	d/a
State	.1%	.1%	.0%	8.1%	1.8% - 12.8%

TABLE 10
COMPARISONS OF ETHNIC COMPOSITION
OF TOTAL DISTRICTS'/JOINT AGREEMENTS'
ENROLLMENTS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATIONS OF STUDENTS
AGED 3-21 FOR 1987-88

Service Units	(A) % of Tot. Enrollment	(B) % of Special Education Population	% Dif. A of B	% Ethnic Group in Special Education	% Range Among Service Units
Ethnicity: White					
Group I	78.9%	74.3%	(5.8%)	13.2%	9.0% - 17.3%
Group II	86.3%	84.2%	(2.4%)	13.8%	10.8% - 19.7%
Group III	82.7%	83.1%	.5%	14.0%	10.9% - 30.3%
Chi. Dist. 299	12.9%	18.2%	41.1%	14.6%	d/a
State	66.6%	70.3%	5.6%	13.9%	9.0% - 30.3%
Ethnicity: Black					
Group I	14.8%	20.4%	37.8%	19.4%	5.9% - 38.5%
Group II	8.3%	11.1%	33.7%	19.0%	6.5% - 53.7%
Group III	10.8%	12.3%	13.9%	15.9%	2.8% - 38.1%
Chi. Dist. 299	60.0%	64.1%	6.8%	11.1%	d/a
State	22.3%	22.6%	1.3%	13.3%	2.8% - 53.7%
Ethnicity: Hispanic					
Group I	5.1%	4.7%	(7.8%)	12.9%	4.0% - 25.0%
Group II	3.3%	3.4%	3.0%	14.4%	1.7% - 25.5%
Group III	3.7%	3.3%	(10.8%)	12.6%	7.0% - 23.5%
Chi. Dist. 299	24.0%	16.4%	(31.7%)	7.1%	d/a
State	8.5%	5.9%	(30.6%)	9.2%	1.7% - 25.5%
Ethnicity: Asian					
Group I	1.2%	.6%	(50.0%)	6.4%	1.6% - 17.0%
Group II	2.0%	1.2%	(40.0%)	8.5%	2.8% - 20.5%
Group III	2.7%	1.2%	(55.6%)	6.4%	.8% - 21.1%
Chi. Dist. 299	2.9%	1.1%	(62.1%)	4.1%	d/a
State	2.4%	1.1%	(54.2%)	6.1%	.8% - 21.1%
Ethnicity: Amer. Ind./Alaskan					
Group I	.1%	.1%	.0%	8.8%	(insufficient pop.)
Group II	.1%	.0%	(100%)	6.7%	(insufficient pop.)
Group III	.1%	.1%	.0%	5.5%	1.6% - 10.4%
Chi. Dist. 299	.2%	.2%	.0%	13.8%	d/a
State	.1%	.1%	.0%	8.7%	1.6% - 10.4%

TABLE 11
COMPARISONS OF ETHNIC COMPOSITION
OF TOTAL DISTRICTS'/JOINT AGREEMENTS'
ENROLLMENTS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATIONS OF STUDENTS
AGED 3-21 FOR 1988-89

Service Units	(A) % of Tot. Enrollment	(B) % of Special Education Population	% Dif. A of B	% Ethnic Group in Special Education	% Range Among Service Units
Ethnicity: White					
Group I	78.6%	74.2%	(5.6%)	13.4%	9.6% - 17.0%
Group II	86.0%	84.8%	(1.4%)	13.9%	10.3% - 20.5%
Group III	81.8%	82.9%	1.3%	14.1%	10.8% - 30.4%
Chi. Dist. 299	12.4%	18.4%	48.4%	15.3%	d/a
State	66.3%	70.7%	6.6%	14.0%	9.6% - 30.4%
Ethnicity: Black					
Group I	14.8%	20.3%	37.2%	19.4%	2.5% - 38.3%
Group II	8.3%	10.8%	30.1%	18.3%	.0% - 41.5%
Group III	11.1%	12.4%	11.7%	15.7%	4.8% - 33.8%
Chi. Dist. 299	59.7%	62.7%	5.0%	10.7%	d/a
State	22.2%	22.0%	(.9%)	13.0%	.0% - 41.5%
Ethnicity: Hispanic					
Group I	5.3%	5.0%	(5.7%)	13.3%	1.9% - 25.5%
Group II	3.5%	3.2%	(8.6%)	13.0%	2.2% - 43.8%
Group III	4.1%	3.5%	(14.6%)	11.9%	.0% - 25.2%
Chi. Dist. 299	24.9%	17.4%	(30.1%)	7.2%	d/a
State	8.9%	6.1%	(31.5%)	9.0%	.0% - 43.8%
Ethnicity: Asian					
Group I	1.2%	.5%	(58.3%)	6.1%	.0% - 17.5%
Group II	2.1%	1.2%	(42.9%)	7.8%	1.7% - 19.6%
Group III	2.9%	1.2%	(58.6%)	5.8%	1.6% - 18.1%
Chi. Dist. 299	2.9%	1.3%	(55.2%)	4.5%	d/a
State	2.6%	1.1%	(57.7%)	5.8%	.0% - 19.6%
Ethnicity: Amer. Ind./Alaskan					
Group I	.1%	.1%	.0%	6.4%	(insufficient pop.)
Group II	.1%	.0%	(100%)	5.7%	(insufficient pop.)
Group III	.1%	.0%	(100%)	4.9%	.0% - 13.1%
Chi. Dist. 299	.2%	.2%	.0%	12.4%	d/a
State	.1%	.1%	.0%	7.6%	.0% - 13.1%

TABLE 12
PERCENTAGES OF ETHNIC POPULATIONS AGED 3-21
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE UNITS GROUPED
BY ENROLLMENT SIZE 1986-87 - 1988-89

ETHNICITY

Service Units	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Amer. Ind./ Alaskan
1986-87					
Group I	13.3%	19.7%	13.2%	7.6%	5.4%
Group II	13.4%	19.9%	13.7%	8.9%	8.4%
Group III	14.0%	16.4%	13.5%	6.9%	5.2%
Chi. Dist. 299	14.9%	11.6%	7.5%	4.0%	13.3%
State	13.8%	13.7%	9.5%	6.4%	8.1%
1987-88					
Group I	13.2%	19.4%	12.9%	6.4%	8.8%
Group II	13.8%	19.0%	14.4%	8.5%	6.7%
Group III	14.0%	15.9%	12.6%	6.4%	5.5%
Chi. Dist. 299	14.6%	11.1%	7.1%	4.1%	13.8%
State	13.9%	13.3%	9.2%	6.1%	8.7%
1988-89					
Group I	13.4%	19.4%	13.3%	6.1%	6.4%
Group II	13.9%	18.3%	13.0%	7.8%	5.7%
Group III	14.1%	15.7%	11.9%	5.8%	4.9%
Chi. Dist. 299	15.3%	10.7%	7.2%	4.5%	12.4%
State	14.0%	13.0%	9.0%	5.8%	7.6%

TABLE 13
PERCENTAGES OF PLACEMENTS
BY ETHNICITY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21
WITH DISABILITIES 1985-86 - 1988-89

ETHNICITY	REGULAR ED.	50% + REG. ED.	50% + SP. ED.	FULL TIME SP. ED.	SEPARATE SCHOOLS
1985-86					
White	33.0%	33.5%	11.4%	14.8%	7.3%
Black	19.5%	28.8%	15.7%	23.9%	12.1%
Hispanic	23.5%	32.1%	13.9%	19.6%	10.9%
Asian	56.0%	17.3%	8.3%	11.7%	6.6%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	26.9%	36.3%	9.3%	16.1%	11.4%
1986-87					
White	32.5%	33.4%	13.0%	13.8%	7.3%
Black	19.4%	29.2%	17.7%	22.0%	11.7%
Hispanic	22.0%	30.6%	19.6%	17.1%	10.7%
Asian	52.4%	16.4%	10.8%	12.6%	7.7%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	28.2%	25.4%	17.1%	13.8%	15.4%
1987-88					
White	31.3%	33.8%	13.7%	13.7%	7.4%
Black	18.0%	29.2%	19.1%	21.7%	11.9%
Hispanic	19.3%	32.3%	21.0%	16.9%	10.5%
Asian	51.3%	17.2%	11.0%	12.4%	8.0%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	32.8%	25.3%	18.8%	9.1%	14.0%
1988-89					
White	31.5%	33.2%	14.6%	13.6%	7.1%
Black	17.7%	27.9%	20.2%	21.3%	12.8%
Hispanic	18.5%	31.5%	21.7%	16.9%	11.2%
Asian	51.0%	16.5%	12.5%	12.1%	7.9%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	28.5%	27.3%	19.4%	9.1%	15.7%

TABLE 14
PERCENTAGES OF PLACEMENTS
OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21
BY ETHNICITY AND PRIMARY DISABILITY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS FOR 1985-86 - 1988-89
- Seriously Emotionally Disturbed -

ETHNICITY	REGULAR ED.	50% + REG. ED.	50% + SP. ED.	FULL TIME SP. ED.	SEPARATE SCHOOLS
1985-86					
White	5.7%	25.9%	18.4%	24.0%	26.0%
Black	2.0%	15.0%	27.2%	26.3%	29.5%
Hispanic	1.9%	18.7%	22.7%	24.0%	32.8%
Asian	4.5%	38.6%	19.3%	16.5%	21.0%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	.0%	16.7%	6.7%	30.0%	46.7%
1986-87					
White	4.8%	24.3%	20.8%	22.6%	27.5%
Black	1.7%	15.2%	23.4%	27.4%	32.3%
Hispanic	1.1%	15.7%	25.7%	23.7%	33.8%
Asian	3.4%	27.0%	24.2%	17.4%	28.1%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	.0%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	47.5%
1987-88					
White	4.1%	23.6%	20.8%	23.1%	28.4%
Black	1.5%	13.4%	23.8%	27.3%	33.9%
Hispanic	1.0%	14.9%	26.6%	23.8%	33.7%
Asian	2.8%	25.4%	22.6%	18.1%	31.1%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	.0%	10.2%	30.6%	20.4%	38.8%
1988-89					
White	3.4%	23.2%	20.8%	23.5%	29.1%
Black	1.0%	11.2%	20.9%	28.1%	38.7%
Hispanic	.5%	12.7%	21.1%	25.0%	40.7%
Asian	2.2%	21.2%	23.5%	17.9%	35.2%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	2.6%	10.3%	20.5%	17.9%	48.7%

*Fewer than 50 students

TABLE 15
PERCENTAGES OF PLACEMENTS
OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21
BY ETHNICITY AND PRIMARY DISABILITY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS FOR 1985-86 - 1988-89
-Learning Disabled -

ETHNICITY	REGULAR ED.	50% + REG. ED.	50% + SP. ED.	FULL TIME SP. ED.	SEPARATE SCHOOLS
1985-86					
White	5.0%	66.6%	15.3%	11.8%	1.3%
Black	3.6%	67.5%	11.4%	16.3%	1.1%
Hispanic	2.8%	63.7%	16.1%	16.2%	1.2%
Asian	3.0%	58.1%	21.5%	15.9%	1.5%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	3.6%	75.0%	8.3%	13.1%	.0%
1986-87					
White	4.1%	66.4%	17.6%	10.7%	1.2%
Black	3.0%	66.2%	17.4%	12.7%	.7%
Hispanic	2.2%	60.2%	23.5%	13.2%	.9%
Asian	2.7%	55.7%	23.1%	16.3%	2.2%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	4.9%	60.7%	26.2%	8.2%	.0%
1987-88					
White	3.9%	65.3%	18.9%	10.6%	1.3%
Black	2.4%	65.0%	21.2%	10.7%	.7%
Hispanic	1.5%	59.9%	25.9%	12.0%	.8%
Asian	2.9%	59.0%	24.3%	11.8%	1.9%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	6.8%	69.5%	18.6%	5.1%	.0%
1988-89					
White	3.9%	64.5%	20.0%	10.5%	1.1%
Black	2.1%	62.1%	24.5%	10.6%	.7%
Hispanic	1.4%	57.8%	28.1%	11.9%	.9%
Asian	2.6%	57.4%	27.6%	10.8%	1.7%
Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	3.2%	65.1%	27.0%	3.2%	1.6%

TABLE 16
PERCENTAGES OF PLACEMENTS
OF STUDENTS AGED 3-21
BY ETHNICITY AND PRIMARY DISABILITY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS FOR 1985-86 - 1988-89
- Educable Mentally Impaired -

ETHNICITY	REGULAR ED.	50% + REG. ED.	50% + SP. ED.	FULL TIME SP. ED.	SEPARATE SCHOOLS
1985-86					
White	.6%	9.5%	34.4%	52.7%	2.8%
Black	.7%	10.1%	33.9%	52.8%	2.5%
Hispanic	1.7%	8.0%	32.2%	55.8%	2.3%
Asian	.0%	2.5%	35.8%	61.7%	.0%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	.0%	20.0%	30.0%	50.0%	.0%
1986-87					
White	.8%	8.9%	39.5%	47.6%	3.2%
Black	1.0%	7.7%	33.4%	56.6%	1.3%
Hispanic	1.7%	5.0%	31.6%	59.7%	1.9%
Asian	2.0%	1.0%	34.7%	62.2%	.0%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	.0%	.0%	16.7%	83.3%	.0%
1987-88					
White	.8%	7.2%	42.1%	46.5%	3.4%
Black	.5%	5.4%	31.2%	61.9%	1.0%
Hispanic	.5%	3.3%	30.0%	64.9%	1.3%
Asian	.0%	.9%	37.2%	59.3%	2.6%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	.0%	.0%	75.0%	25.0%	.0%
1988-89					
White	.6%	6.0%	44.7%	45.6%	3.1%
Black	.4%	3.1%	34.5%	60.8%	1.1%
Hispanic	.3%	1.9%	33.7%	63.1%	1.0%
Asian	.0%	1.7%	38.5%	58.1%	1.7%
*Amer. Ind./ Alaskan	.0%	.0%	66.7%	33.3%	.0%

*Fewer than 50 students

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Future Issues: Individualized Education Program, Federal Annual Data Reports.